DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 461 017 CE 076 234

AUTHOR	Devlin-Foltz, Betsy
TITLE	Peace Corps Tales from Open Space. Information Collection & Exchange T0089.
INSTITUTION	Peace Corps, Washington, DC. Information Collection and Exchange Div.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	58p.; Written and edited in collaboration with Sandy Callier.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Community Education; Conferences; Foreign Countries; *Inservice Education; *Participative Decision Making; *Planning; Voluntary Agencies; *Volunteer Training; Volunteers; Workshops
IDENTIFIERS	*Open Space Technology; *Peace Corps

ABSTRACT

This volume documents and reflects on the use of Open Space Technology by Peace Corps staff in the United States and in the field. An introduction reviews basic principles and processes of Open Space, which is a meeting and conference process congruent with Peace Corps philosophy, to clarify ways trainers have interpreted, adapted, and used it in conferences and workshops. An abbreviated article examines the fit between the Peace Corps and Open Space. The 15 tales are divided into 3 sections. "Classic Open Space: One to Three Days" consists of the following: "Abidjan and Beyond: Health and Water and Sanitation Workshop"; "Magic in Madang: Asia-Pacific Administrative Officers and Cashiers Conference"; "This is the New Way! Mali Project Review"; "Facilitating a Project Review Using Open Space in Guyana"; "Pura Vida: Costa Rica Urban Youth Workshop"; "Putting Responsibility in its Place: Education and Environment Sector Workshops in Poland and Kyrgyz Republic"; "Opening Space for Volunteer Support: Office of Special Services Benin/Togo, Central African Republic, Western Samoa"; "A Staff Retreat in Open Space in Ecuador"; and "Opening Intermittent Spaces." "Opening Small Spaces: Less Than One Day" contains the following: "Opening Space at Language Coordinators Annual Conferences"; "A Sign of Respect: Opening Space in PSTs and ISTs"; "Open Space at Overseas Staff Training"; and "Opening the Space in Meetings." "Opening Large Spaces: Four Days or More" has two sections: "The Gift of Open Space: Africa Regional Training Managers Conferences" and "Opening Space for Community Entry and Participation in Pre-Service Training in Tonga." Each tale includes descriptions of the event, highlights of features, and a list of advice and lessons learned by facilitators, planners, and participants. Appendixes provides a summary of issues to consider in using Open Space and a sampler of Peace Corps Open Space events. (YLB)

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Peace Corps Tales from OPEN SPACE

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—Harrison Owen

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Acknowledgments

This project would never have been possible without the help of many. Some of their names appear in the pages to follow, others do not, but their contributions are important nonetheless. The Peace Corps acknowledges all those who helped with the gathering, writing, editing, and production of *Peace Corps Tales from Open Space*.

Brenda Bowman
Martha Bozman
Joe Byrnes
Sandy Callier
Amelia Catanasiga
Angela Churchill
Juan Coward
Ignatio Chiyaka
T. J. Delahanty
Guimba Diallo
Eliane Dogore
Anne Marie Emmett
Jacob Fillion
Lynn Foden
Bridget Fox
Judy Frank
Lisa Frye
Anita Friedman
Francisco Garces
Doug Gilzow
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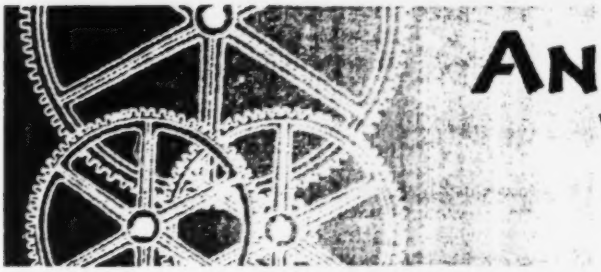
About These Tales

Peace Corps Tales from Open Space documents and reflects on the use of Open Space Technology by Peace Corps staff in the United States and in the field. Each tale includes descriptions of the event and highlights its particular features, followed by a list of advice and lessons learned by facilitators, planners, and participants. When possible we have included a variety of voices in each article. Sometimes the advice given by different contributors may seem contradictory. We know that there will be a diversity among the readers of this document. Some of you will have experience with Open Space, some of you will not. For those who are novices, we have provided a brief introduction to the process and an appendix on what to consider if you are thinking of conducting an Open Space event. Our intent is to give you basic information about Open Space and share some stories so you can experience it. For those of you who already have experience with Open Space we hope these stories will provide you with a range of ways other people have used Open Space, so that you are encouraged to experiment further. We urge all of the readers of these tales to consult Harrison Owen's book Open Space Technology: A User's Guide* and contact the people mentioned in the tales as you plan future Open Space events.

*Harrison Owen, Open Space Technology: A User's Guide, Potomac: Abbott Publishing, 1992.



An Introduction to Open Space Technology

Open Space Technology is a meeting and conference process highly congruent with the Peace Corps' development philosophy of working WITH people and not for them. It has been used at the Peace Corps since 1994 with groups ranging from less than ten to well over a hundred. It is a participatory process that is particularly effective at helping diverse groups to self organize to respond to new and changing challenges. It invites every participant to make a commitment to work on issues for which he or she has energy.

This introduction reviews the basic principles and processes of Open Space to help clarify the many ways trainers have interpreted, adapted, and used it in their conferences and workshops. Open Space is outlined here in its "classic" incarnation, as its developer, Harrison Owen, describes it in *Open Space Technology: A User's Guide* (OST). As you will see later in this document, Open Space has been modified and adapted to many contexts at the Peace Corps.

The Circle

An Open Space event begins with a circle. The circle establishes from the beginning that there will be no expert presentations and that, for the purpose of the conference, everyone is "in charge." Of course, people will go back to the "real world" after the conference is over. For this reason, Open Space works best when the environment into which they will return is one that is working to minimize hierarchy and encourage people to take responsibility.

The conference opens with the facilitator stating the theme and inviting people to determine what they really care about in relation to it. Caring about an issue requires that people have passion and energy for it and are willing to take responsibility for making something happen. "Open Space Technology," says Harrison Owen, "runs on passion bounded by responsibility." Without passion nobody is interested, without responsibility nothing will get done. "In an Open Space environment, where the fundamental condition for success is self-management, passionless good ideas are not only useless, they are a liability. They consume precious space and further suggest that somebody (usually the great unnamed THEY) should be taking responsibility. The point is THEY do not exist, and nothing will get done until I, you or we get on with business" (OST, p. 62).

After the introduction, people are told that in a few minutes they will be invited to come forward and share their passion and commit to doing something about it by convening a session. Before they do this, the facilitator shares the four principles and one law by which Open Space operates.

The Four Principles

1. Whoever comes is the right people.

This principle honors a fear some may have that the right people will not come to a session they have convened or that perhaps no one will show up at all. This principle affirms that the people who do come have the energy and interest to contribute and/or learn and will be the most useful to the process. If no one shows up for a session, it may be that it was not a good idea in the first place, or that it was a great idea at the wrong time, or that maybe it was a great idea, but the convener was the only one competent to deal with it.

2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.

This principle reminds participants that real learning and real progress will take place when we all move beyond our agendas and expectations and are open to what is available in the session at that moment.

3. Whenever it starts is the right time.

This principle acknowledges that just because a session is scheduled to start at 1:00 or 3:00 p.m., there is no guarantee that anything useful will take place at that time. Open Space requires flexibility.

4. When it's over, it's over.

If a session is scheduled for two hours, but all the work gets done in the first half hour, the meeting should end. Likewise, if the discussion is useful and productive and it goes beyond the allotted time, there is no reason to cut it off in Open Space.

The Law of Two Feet

We all have two feet (or equivalent mobility). In Open Space participants are strongly encouraged to use them if and when they are neither learning nor contributing. As Owen puts it, "This law may seem blunt, but it has three major effects. First, it is death to egotists who are sure that they alone possess the truth, and further that it is their divine mission to impart it, regardless of any body's feelings or desires. . . . The law also puts the responsibility for our own actions directly on our shoulders" (OST, p. 72–73).

In addition, the Law of Two Feet creates Bumblebees and Butterflies. "Bumblebees are those people who take the freedom of the law very seriously and use their two feet, constantly flitting from meeting to meeting. . . . Like their counterparts in nature, they pollinate and cross-pollinate, lending richness and variety to the discussions." Butterflies are those who never get into any meeting. "They create centers of nonaction where silence may be enjoyed or some new unexplored topic of conversation engaged. If you watch a Butterfly over time, you will notice that every so often someone will stop by. Maybe conversation will occur, maybe not, but if it does, it almost inevitably ends up being significant" (OST, p. 74).

The Community Bulletin Board

Next the real work begins. In the center of the circle are large sheets of paper, tape, and markers. Participants are invited to make a commitment to the Open Space event by coming to the center of the room and using these tools to write their names and a short title for sessions they wish to convene. This moment, when empowerment takes its first visible form, has a different flavor with each group. Some groups are silent for a while, waiting for inspiration to strike. With other groups, participants are so eager to announce their sessions that the facilitator risks being trampled. Conveners announce the titles of their sessions to the group. This serves as an automatic editing process to avoid duplication. They then go to a grid on the wall to find a time and place to meet and post their sheets to create the agenda for the conference.

The Marketplace

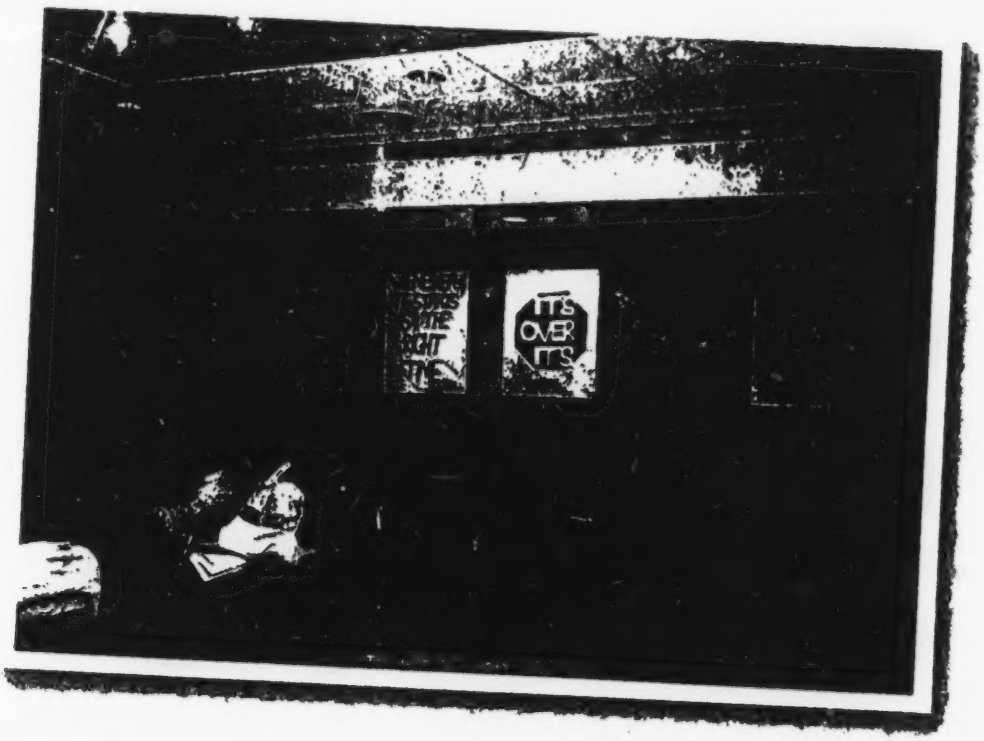
Once all the sessions are posted, participants meet at the wall and sign up for the sessions they plan to attend. Some sessions may be combined; others may be moved to different times and places when conveners respond to requests by eager would-be participants who see two sessions that appeal to them scheduled at the same time.

The bulk of the conference, usually one to three days, is then spent in the small group meetings, with participants using the "Law of Two Feet" as they see fit. The groups are self-managed. The facilitator's only official role is to convene "Evening News" and "Morning Announcements" when the whole group gathers to share anything they'd like to with each other.

Proceedings

In conferences of more than one day, a convener's responsibility generally includes submitting a summary of the main points covered during the session. Lap-top computers are usually available in a "Newsroom" for this purpose so that session summaries are recorded and posted for review as the conference proceeds.

Participants receive copies of the completed proceedings before they leave the conference. These written accounts give information on sessions to those not able to attend and serve as a record of commitments made and an impetus for follow-on action.



Closing the Space

The last gathering in Open Space also takes place in a circle. The participants may pass a "Talking Stick" (in large gatherings this may be a microphone) and are invited to share briefly what the event has meant to them and what they propose to do in the future.

When all have spoken, the facilitator may invite participants first to look around the circle to acknowledge everyone in it; then ask them to turn and face out of the circle and think about what they will be doing in the days to come; and then ask them to leave the circle.

At the end of the conference, energy is typically high. Participants have chosen to be at a conference on a theme about which they care. They have created the agenda and determined how they can best participate. They typically leave the circle with strong and lasting commitments to the tasks they have before them.

Open Space at the Peace Corps

This is an abbreviated version of an article by Sandy Callier and Betsy Devlin-Foltz that appeared in the March/April 1997 issue of At Work: Stories of Tomorrow's Workplace, *published by Berrett-Koehler.*

The fit between the Peace Corps and Open Space is a natural one, not surprising in light of the fact that the creator of Open Space technology, Harrison Owen, gained some of his formative professional experience as a Peace Corps field staffer in West Africa. Moreover, the Peace Corps' goals, its history and organizational structure, and the diverse countries where Volunteers live and work also make Open Space an ideal method for strengthening communication among people.

The Peace Corps' development philosophy is based on the premise that Volunteers must work WITH the people of developing countries, not for them. The Peace Corps seeks to promote self-sufficiency by building human capacity. Organizationally, the Peace Corps benefits from a constantly renewing work force of Volunteers who serve two years and American staff who serve no more than five. Although such brevity of service may at times inhibit institutional memory, it also fosters new ideas and encourages people to take responsibility for action at the local level. Processes such as Open Space that support self-organizing systems are needed and valued. At the same time, deeply traditional values and practices in these countries are generally congruent with such Open Space concepts as the circle, the marketplace, and the community bulletin board.

What Open Space has Contributed to Peace Corps

In less than two years, Open Space has affected how we plan for workshops and conferences with staff, Volunteers, and our host country partners. Open Space helps us determine and better understand the needs of Peace Corps Volunteers not just as an initial step, but rather from continuing dialogue in which needs emerge, evolve, and are explored by everyone involved.

Open Space has also affirmed and contributed to the recent evolution of training Volunteers as well as staff. It has moved us beyond traditional, structured group experiences designed and controlled by trainers. Open Space complements community-based training approaches and has inspired variations of community-based training for Peace Corps' programs in Malawi, Tonga, and Guyana.

Future of Open Space at the Peace Corps

As Peace Corps continues to experiment with Open Space, some important challenges need to be addressed.

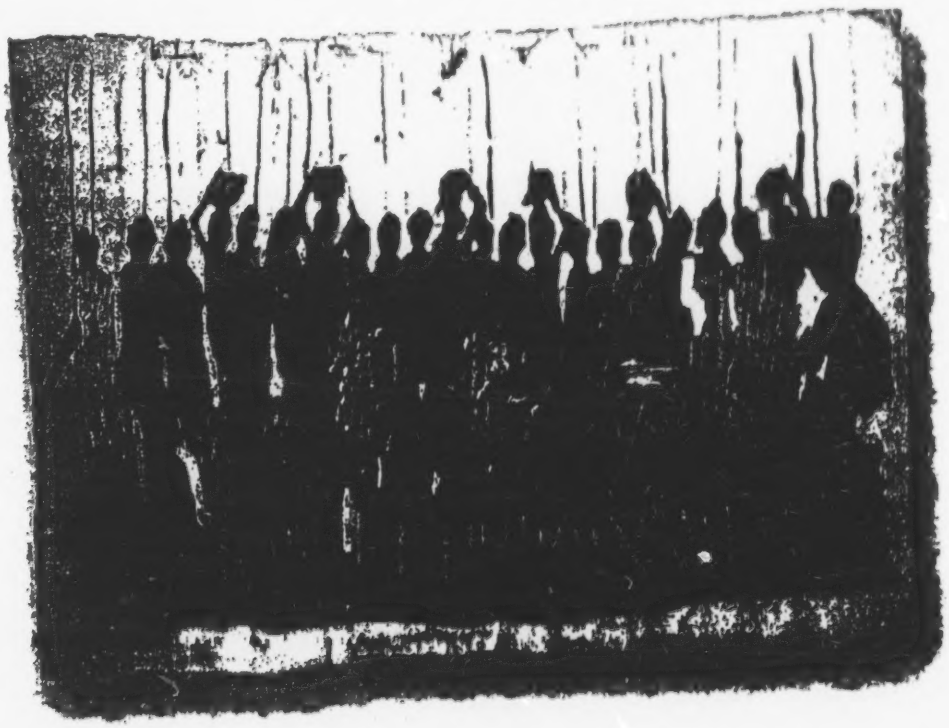
- In Open Space groups that have participants of very different levels of experience or power (such as young people and adults), the Peace Corps has used structured sessions prior to Open Space to help ensure that less powerful voices are heard. How much and what kind of such structures are useful and necessary? Whatever structures

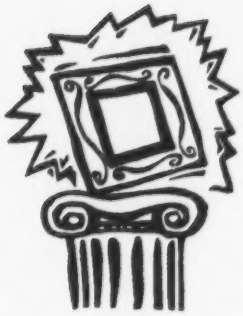
are used, they need to serve the needs of participants, not just the conference organizers.

- Peace Corps has been successful in using Open Space to identify and explore training needs for Volunteers, staff, and counterparts. More controversial is whether and how we can use Open Space to provide skills training.

- The very success of Open Space means that it is vulnerable to misuse or mislabeling. It is different from facilitated agenda setting; however, it is not an anything goes, free for all. It should be used when participants are genuinely being given the opportunity to take responsibility. In the appropriate setting, Open Space is a powerful methodology that enables people to act on their passion. How can we provide guidance on using Open Space without unnecessarily prescribing or restricting its use?

"When it's over, it's just beginning" (corollary to a basic Open Space principle, "When it's over, it's over") is certainly true at Peace Corps. The use of Open Space in any one event has typically led to multiple uses and settings; these uses and their effects are not easy to trace or quantify. How our uses of Open Space will evolve is also uncertain. What is clear is that the Peace Corps has found Open Space to be a useful way to strengthen communications among staff, our host country counterparts, and our Volunteers to do what matters most—to help people build a better future for themselves and their communities.



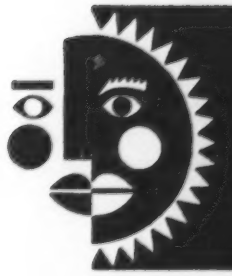


Classic Open Space Events: One to Three Days

This first section addresses Peace Corps Open Space events that lasted one to three days, the time frame recommended by Harrison Owen.

Even in these standard three-day events, Peace Corps trainers and facilitators modified Open Space to better address participants' needs and scheduling constraints. Structured sessions were added before and, in some cases, after the Open Space events. In the Central African Republic (CAR), participants were asked to generate action items during their sessions, which they later put on a planning calendar. In Kyrgyz Republic and Costa Rica, Open Space was preceded or followed by site visits. In Mali, where Open Space was substituted at the last minute when the previously planned focus group format was deemed to be inappropriate, participants were asked to address the focus group's questions in their Open Space sessions and the proceedings. At a professional conference in San Francisco, Peace Corps staff from around the world gathered in Open Space for two-hour blocks of time throughout the larger conference schedule.

Many veterans of Open Space applaud the energy it unleashes from participants and its positive effect on morale. Perhaps what is most important to remember in adapting the process is that we do not alter the INTENTION of Open Space. When people are invited to take responsibility for determining and implementing the agenda, they usually do.



Abidjan and Beyond

Health and Water and Sanitation Workshop Abidjan, May 1995

An early Peace Corps Open Space event, the Health and Water and Sanitation Workshop served as a needs assessment for programming in these sectors and sparked the creation of an important network. Participants and planners of this event were struck by how useful Open Space was in encouraging dialogue across cultures and functions.

One of Peace Corps' first Open Space events was a workshop held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, May 1995, for staff in the Africa Region and the Washington, D. C., offices involved in the Health and Water and Sanitation Sectors. Shelley Smith, of the Office of Training and Program Support (OTAPS)*, was one of the planners for the meeting. She remembers the concerns of the planning committee that Open Space might not translate across cultures: "Americans can be vocal more quickly in these kinds of settings and might determine the topics before their African colleagues had a chance to speak." This fear was unfounded. The first to come forward was an African Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD), who raised a sensitive issue: "Death and Dying." She was concerned about how to support Volunteers dealing with the impact of the AIDS epidemic. Within weeks Open Space began to sprout up in other workshops throughout Peace Corps/Africa.

Yamai Secka-Jack, APCD for Health and Education in the Gambia, remembers: "It gave us an opportunity to discuss things that were of particular interest to us. We did not have to sit through others that were not . . . . I was just about to start my health project. I was able to get insights from other people's projects . . .

"I CAME TO THIS CONFERENCE to listen to the experts only to find out that I am one!"

about strategies that worked." Secka-Jack also points out that the typically smaller size of Open Space groups can be a good forum for people who are shy and are not comfortable talking in large groups. The smaller group can also allow participants to explore topics in greater depth.

Shelley Smith thinks Open Space is best suited to exploring questions and developing networks. Also, she does not use Open Space when she has limited time and an agenda of her own. When she and a colleague held a one-day meeting in Uganda following the Abidjan conference, they needed to get specific information from the participants about their work in HIV/AIDS. "I decided not to use Open Space, because I didn't want to pretend that my agenda didn't exist," she says. She believes, however, that the relationships that many of the participants had developed at the earlier Abidjan Open Space event helped them work together easily in Uganda.

Angela Churchill, also of the Health Sector agrees, "Open Space is good for forming a new group and assessing its needs . . . . It also supports the concept of networks." The Abidjan conference led to the creation of AERMANI, the Africa ECAM** Regional Micronutrient Initiative, a group that continues to meet to share ideas and support. "It also encourages the

*Functions and staff in OTAPS were realigned in October 1997 and are now part of the Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research. OTAPS is used herein to identify where staff was at the time of the events described.

**ECAM is the acronym for what was formerly the Europe, Central Asia, and Mediterranean Region.

empowerment of APCDs," says Churchill. "You can't hold a workshop now that schedules all the available time in advance. The APCDs will demand time to spend learning from each other .... They can be very isolated at their posts. Open Space encourages them to see themselves as part of a region and having something valuable to share."

Smith and Churchill do not use Open Space for building skills, though Churchill has used it in combination with structured skill development sessions. At the AERMANI workshop held in Niamey, Niger, the September following the Abidjan conference, she spent the first day sharing knowledge and skills about micronutrients, then moved into Open Space to invite participants to examine how to apply them. Among outcomes from this event were several In-Service Training (IST) Workshops on micronutrients in Mali and the inclusion of health on the seasonal calendar, a concept that is now introduced to volunteers in the *PACA: Participatory Analysis for Community Action* manual (ICE publication no. M0053).

Yamai Secka-Jack remembers the closing of the Abidjan Open Space event fondly. It allowed participants to summarize and share issues discussed in their Open Space sessions, as well as note the advantages and disadvantages of Open Space. During the closing, Judy Frank of the Office of Staging and one of the Open Space facilitators lead the group in "The Web." Participants passed a ball of yarn to each other as they shared their thoughts from Open Space. At the end of the activity the group was connected in a large web. It was during this activity that one of the participants summed up the feelings of many, "I came to this conference to listen to the experts only to find out that I am one!"

Advice and Lessons Learned

- If you want to control outcomes of a workshop or if you have an agenda of your own, don't use Open Space. Open Space is good at bringing down walls and barriers if one adheres to the principles. Facilitators and planners need to examine whether they can let go before deciding to use Open Space. The power of Open Space is the facilitator letting go of the agenda, which is visually represented by the blank wall. (Smith)
- Know what your needs are. Don't just throw Open Space in because it's popular. It is just one of many types of workshops. It is particularly good for forming new networks and assessing their needs. (Churchill)
- Consider using Open Space cyclically for conferences with the same group and interchanging it with other designs. (Churchill)

Magic in Madang

Asia-Pacific Administrative Officers and Cashier Conference
Madang, Papua New Guinea, March 1996

This conference should challenge some of our stereotypes about who will be most receptive to Open Space. The facilitators' faith in the process allowed them to encourage honest conversations among members of the planning committee before the event, which brought together administrative officers and cashiers in the Asia-Pacific Region. Despite their anxiety, the planners took the risk of trying a new design. The results: 100 percent of the participants recommended using Open Space at future conferences. As one participant put it, "The only problem was that we didn't have enough time!"

In March 1996, the Asia-Pacific Region convened a three-day Open Space workshop in Madang, Papua New Guinea. With the exception of a brief welcome by Mike Weckesser, Chief Administrative Officer for the Asia-Pacific Region, and some time at the very end of the conference devoted to one-on-one meetings, participants spent the entire time in Open Space. "There were concerns beforehand about holding a workshop with no agenda," says Weckesser. Would it work in Papua New Guinea? Would it work with these participants? "We are the administrators and financial managers and, stereotypically, the bean counters, numbers people . . . not gamers," said Mark Nachtrieb, Administrative Liaison Officer with the Office of Training and Program Support (OTAPS), a member of the planning committee, and a participant in the conference. These are not people who typically choose to attend a meeting without knowing in advance what will be on the agenda. Nor would one expect them to agree to spend an entire conference in Open Space.

However, Open Space seemed like a good idea for many familiar reasons. The participants were from a number of different cultures, held various positions, and had a variety of needs. There were those who have been in their jobs for decades and others who were new. Some were based in Washington, others were the cashiers or administrative officers in the Asia-Pacific Region. Participants also included representatives from the State Department in Bangkok and Manila. "Open Space," says Nachtrieb, "tossed everyone in the soup on equal footing." The planners also chose it for financial reasons, "We are dealing with decreasing resources. We decided to optimize them by taking advantage of who was going to be there." Weckesser hired Elwin Guild as facilitator. Guild had worked at Peace Corps Headquarters in the Office of Management and as country director in the Solomon Islands. According to both Weckesser and Nachtrieb, Guild's energy, enthusiasm, knowledge of the local culture, and credibility with the participants were key in launching the event.

Before they got to Papua New Guinea, the facilitators had important work to do convincing participants from Peace Corps Washington that Open

"Instead of sitting and listening to prearranged lectures, I was searching out those topics and people I needed to learn from and I found myself participating more than I ever have at a conference . . . .I came away with my questions answered and relationships built or strengthened."

—Cindy Lang-Benjamin

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Space could work and get them what they needed. They held a briefing for anyone who had a stake in the conference to describe Open Space to them. People were nervous. So Guild met with each person from Headquarters who would be attending the conference to discuss their expectations. "I described the process in a 'flip' way," says Guild. He wanted them to know that this would be a very different kind of conference, but that they could get out of it what they wanted. By the time the team arrived in Papua New Guinea, three days of travel had only increased their anxiety. The facilitators continued to be authentic, honest, and up-beat about the process, though they too felt nervous.

Somehow they got themselves to the circle. After Weckesser's opening remarks, Guild opened the space with an introduction he said he rehearsed at least 300 times! He invited participants to create the agenda. "Picture this," says Nachtrieb, "we were in an overly air conditioned room with people who live in a subtropical climate . . . It was freezing and the energy felt cold too. For 10 to 15 very long seconds, the room was on the verge of giggles, a sure sign that it would soon be all over. Then a host-country national stood up and announced the first session." From then on the group had bought in.

Amelia Catanasiga, Administrative Officer for Peace Corps in Fiji and a conference participant, remembers that at first she was confused by the idea of Open Space, but when she realized that she was being invited to choose what she wanted to do at the conference, she exclaims, "That excited me! People bring very different experiences to the conference. Some are new. Some, like me, have been in their jobs for a while. I would find it very boring to learn, for example, about how to put together a budget . . . . I was comfortable. I wasn't bored. I learned new things that I was able to bring back to post. The only problem was that we didn't have enough time!"

Cindy Lang-Benjamin, Administrative Officer for China, also felt uncertain at first, "The idea of three things going on at the same time . . . made me a little uncomfortable . . . as I didn't want to miss anything. As we settled down to a conference routine, I started to find that I really liked

"I'VE DONE A LOT OF TRAINING and facilitating. Some of it has bombed. This was an example of perfection: a combination of hard work, good luck and good people . . . It felt like a great risk at the time. In retrospect it was exactly what we needed."

—Mark Nachtrieb

this method of Open Space. I was able to make out of the conference what I wanted and needed. Instead of sitting and listening to prearranged lectures, I was searching out those topics and people I needed to learn from, and I found myself participating more than I ever have at a conference. I was able to interact more one-on-one or in small groups (which is my favored method of relating/learning). I came away with my questions answered and relationships built or strengthened. The conference notes were posted quickly and we left the conference with the disk of notes from all sessions in hand. This reassured me that anything I might have missed I had on disk."

The participants' evaluations of the conference were very positive. They all recommended using Open Space at future conferences. On a scale of 1 to 10, 82 percent of the participants rated the agenda created by the group as 8 or above. All the participants rated the level of information and skills they gained as good to excellent.

Mike Weckesser believes the conference was successful because everyone was on equal footing, "It was nice for the administrative officers and cashiers to get out of traditional 'school' relationships and develop relationships and talk to each other. The energy level was high. Even for long-time employees [who have been to many conferences before]." Mark Nachtrieb agrees, "People levitated out of the room . . . . The closing took two hours at the end of the three days. It was intense; positive. Everyone spoke. There was so much caring . . . "

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Advice and Lessons Learned

- If you are going to do it, do it. Don't try to mix Open Space with other designs, keynotes, outside speakers. (Weckesser and Guild)

- Open Space is a great equalizing, venting, clarifying mechanism. It works very well when organizational issues need to be brought up in an introductory way. However, when planning an event like this, make sure you are clear why you are choosing Open Space methodology. (Nachtrieb)

- I never worked so hard in all my life, but the work was all up-front. I slept with Open Space, danced with it and it haunted me. Open Space facilitation is an ART If you're the facilitator, get *Open Space Technology*. Use it to familiarize yourself with the process, then keep it on hand as a reference. Follow Harrison Owen's advice. BE PRESENT. Remember that you only get one shot. You get it up front for about an hour. If you are a successful facilitator you must then disappear. (Guild)

- My only area of improvement might be the method of getting started. We really did have a bit of a mess as people were writing down their topics. Some topics got duplicated and there wasn't enough room for other topics. Our coordinators worked it out, but I know it caused them a bit of early conference stress. I'm not sure how to improve this without taking away from the active participation of everybody. (Lang-Benjamin)

- Open Space would be more effective if the larger groups were broken up into smaller groups of ten or twelve, allowing for more individual participation. In a larger group, the needs and concerns of many do not get addressed or recorded. This could be achieved by dividing groups up and running the sessions at the same time, providing that participants agree to facilitate the extra sessions. The other option would be to run the same session in the morning and the afternoon encouraging participants to divide up somewhat equally. (Catanasiga)

- The facilitation of certain topics would be more effective if groups were divided up into "new comers" and "old comers". In my experience, the combining of the two groups encourages the newer, more reserved participants to shy away and not contribute. They often leave the group without having learned much. The group reports would then reveal the contrasts between new staff and more experienced staff concerns. (Catanasiga)

- Open Space would not be appropriate if everyone needed to learn a new procedure or system during the event and keeping their job was contingent on learning it. (Nachtrieb)

- Look for a more systematic way of finalizing the results. Make sure the proceedings get disseminated and read. Get buy-in from others in the organization. (Weckesser)

- If I were using it again, I would urge people to prepare more in advance, because we now have people who are familiar with the process. I would urge them to talk about priority issues at their staff meetings before they leave their posts. (Nachtrieb)

- I would use it again. I would also consider using Open Space cyclically, alternating with other kinds of workshops. (Weckesser)

THIS IS THE NEW WAY

Mali Project Review

Sevare, Mali, December 1996

The final decision to use Open Space for this one-day conference came late in the planning process. Though the planning committee had discussed Open Space as a possibility, it wasn't until the night before that the committee decided to set aside its focus group design and turn to Open Space. It seemed the best way to allow the conference to meet the needs of a diverse group of participants. The results included much greater participation of Volunteers in the writing of the new project plan than had been the case in the past.

Guimba Diallo, the Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD) for Natural Resource Management in Mali, wanted to use Open Space for the Natural Resources Project Review Workshop for Peace Corps Volunteers and host-country national counterparts. "As an APCD managing 40 Volunteers, I have my concerns, but Volunteers have their concerns too. My need is not more important than theirs. [Using Open Space for the project review] was a unique way to include everyone: Volunteers, host-country nationals and Peace Corps staff." Jamie Watts explains that she and Scott Lewis, both Environment Sector Specialists at the Office of Training and Program Support (OTAPS), were concerned about this idea initially. "We hesitated to use Open Space even though we have had very positive experiences with it. The objective for the workshop was to gather information for the project review and we wondered whether the workshop should have more focus than Open Space would allow. We designed a workshop around focus groups with a series of questions to address."

"To address the needs of the project review, planners asked conveners to include an answer to the following question in their written reports: "How could the results of this discussion help in the revision of the project plan for the Peace Corps Natural Resources Management Project?"

By the time they arrived in Sevare, Mali, after having done a needs assessment and conducted site visits, Watts and Lewis realized that needs and expectations were very diverse. Some participants were not clear about the role of the Peace Corps. The Volunteers had issues that were uniquely theirs. "It was 9:00 P.M. [the evening before the workshop]," says Watts. "We had just had conversations in the bar with a number of the Peace Corps Volunteers. The members of the planning committee were working on presentations they were going to give the next day and Scott and I told them that we wanted to use Open Space instead of the focus group format." Diallo remembers this moment with pride that his initial suggestion was validated.

Fortunately, Watts had brought her Open Space materials, specifically a suggested text for the opening remarks. Diallo prepared to introduce Open Space while Watts set up the wall and the room. They began the next morning with some formal presentations on the project review, the needs assessments, and the site visits. During these presentations it became even clearer that the complex group needs would have been very

"Open Space is democracy in action. In many of the countries in which we work it is a new experience . . . people come to the conclusion that they are responsible . . . that WE ALL are responsible."

—Jamie Watts

difficult for the facilitators to manage using another process. Even when Diallo introduced Open Space there was not unanimous appreciation for the opportunity. One very vocal Malian participant thought it was a bad idea. "I don't support this," he said. "We need topics and a structure!" Watts remembers Diallo's response: "That was the old way. This is Open Space. This is the new way!" He then handed the participant a marker and paper on which to write HIS topic. The participant did and convened a session that attracted a lot of people for a fruitful discussion. Diallo points out, "I had scheduled one day to cover a lot of topics. At the beginning, all the participants were a little worried about whether we could cover them all. By the end of the day they were satisfied."

To address the needs of the project review, planners asked conveners to include an answer to the following question in their written reports: "How could the results of this discussion help in the revision of the project plan for the Peace Corps Natural Resources Management Project?" Diallo describes the major outcome of the workshop as a shift in responsibility for this plan. "At the end of the workshop we knew what to do. I had expected to just [write the project plan] myself. I realized that there is another way." During the closing of the workshop the group decided that Volunteers in each region would define the tasks that needed to be done, that two people in every region would help write a draft plan that would be shared at a meeting of representatives from each region. This could serve as a foundation for a new project plan.

"C'est un outil formidable!," concludes Diallo. Watts is equally enthusiastic, "Open Space is democracy in action. In many of the countries in which we work it is a new experience . . . people come to the conclusion that they are responsible . . . that WE ALL are responsible."

Advice and Lessons Learned

- At the beginning people may want more structure. As the facilitator, be patient with them. (Diallo)
- Insist on the importance of participants taking responsibility. (Diallo)
- Be prepared to use Open Space when the needs of the group are diverse. (Watts)

Facilitating a Project Review Using Open Space

Guyana, June 1996

As in the event described in the previous article, planners used Open Space in Guyana to encourage greater participation of Volunteers and host country counterparts in the project review process. After closing the space, they gave participants time to develop their own action plans.

In June 1996 Paul Sully, Youth Development Coordinator, and T. J. Delahanty, Associate Peace Corps director (APCD) for Guyana, organized a project review workshop, which included Open Space, for 27 Volunteers, counterparts, and Peace Corps staff members. The goals of the workshop were to involve participants in the review of the Health and Youth Project Plans, incorporate learnings from the first several months of field experiences into the Peace Corps Project Plans and develop an action plan for monitoring and reporting the accomplishments of the programs.

Sully describes project review as a several part process, "First to educate everyone about what the project plan says, second to build consensus among stakeholders on chief areas of the project, third to build relationships among stakeholders to strengthen communication, and finally to create resolve to choose appropriate indicators and to invest the time to monitor the project." He sees himself as the "facilitator" of evaluation, not as an outside expert. Though it is difficult for Volunteers and counterparts to see the project plans as changeable, he encouraged them to view them as "living documents."

Sully and Delahanty structured the workshop to reflect this philosophy. On the first day, Sully conducted a session on leadership, a discussion about communication, and a team building simulation. This was followed by a session on project planning at Peace Corps that included an examination of the difference between problem-focused and asset-focused development. Audrey Waters and Michael Ketover, Peace Corps Guyana's Health and Youth Technical Coordinators respectively, then conducted an overview and examination of the Health and Youth Project Plans. The overview was followed by an activity that allowed Volunteer/counterpart teams to reconstruct the existing Project Plans, which had been printed on chart paper and then cut apart. The last session that day was a talk delivered by Ketover on the Convention of the Rights of the Child. On the second day, Sully conducted a formal session on monitoring and evaluation before "launching" Open Space .

"The planners decided to use Open Space to encourage deeper participation in the project review process and to help people look at the bigger picture without getting trapped in the minutiae of tasks and milestones."

The planners decided to use Open Space to encourage deeper participation in the project review process and to help people look at the bigger picture without getting trapped in the minutiae of tasks and milestones. Delahanty was pleased with the information that they were able to gather as a result. "Open Space gave us insight into what the volunteers were dealing with and ideas about how to focus the content areas of the plan." Sessions were con-

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vened on a range of topics: Counseling Female Trainees and Apprentices, Getting Past Politics in Community Development, Children's Mental Health, Programming for Disadvantaged Youth, The Rewards and Challenges of Asset-Based Approach to Community Development, Children's Rights in Guyana, Sustainability of Projects, Structures that Hinder Creativity and Flexibility, Strategies to Deal with Violence Against Children, Implementation Strategies: How to Turn Good Ideas and Plans into ACTION, Drug Abused Parents that Have Abandoned their Children and Suggested Assistance for Them, Adolescent Drug Prevention Programs, Community Action vs. Central Control. Participants were also pleased with the use of Open Space: 21 out of 27 evaluations listed it as the most beneficial aspect of the workshop.

Both Sully and Delahanty point out that Open Space did not lead to specific revisions of the plan itself. Sully decided that as facilitator he did not want to be too directive during the Open Space portion of the workshop and notes that, "unless you challenge participants to hone in on specific modifications to the plan they won't do it." On the last day of the workshop, after "closing the space," Sully and Delahanty held sessions on indicators and monitoring tools and gave Volunteers and their counterparts time to develop their own action plans. Sully concludes, "Open Space convincingly puts participants in charge of a process that more easily translates into their participatory monitoring role. This helps overcome the field bias that monitoring is a task primarily to satisfy headquarters."

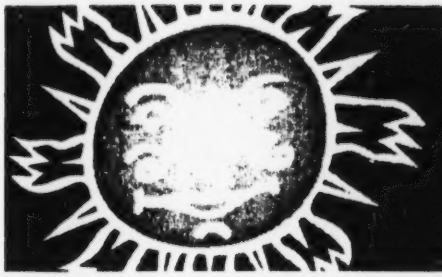
"Open Space convincingly puts participants in charge of a process that more easily translates into their participatory monitoring role. This helps overcome the field bias that monitoring is a task primarily to satisfy headquarters."

—Paul Sully

Advice and Lessons Learned

- Open Space is particularly good at accessing information and revising the content areas of the plan. It can reveal tangential but related areas program managers may wish to examine to consider if they will help or hinder the success of the project. It leaves the onus on the APCD to incorporate information gathered in Open Space into the plan. (Delahanty and Sully)

- Hold structured sessions at the end for action planning. (Sully)



PURA VIDA
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
Costa Rica, October 1996

The title "Pura Vida" was suggested by Anita Friedman, Programming Officer for the Inter-America Region. It is a Costa Rican expression that means "how great things are." The participants in this workshop were equally enthusiastic about the process. An interesting feature of this event was a day of site visits in between two days of Open Space and an experiment in holding Open Space sessions on a bus trip to the sites.

The Inter-America Sub Regional Youth Workshop brought together Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and host-country counterparts in Costa Rica in October 1996. The purpose of this workshop on youth development was "to increase awareness of youth interests and issues in the Inter-America Region and to enhance youth programming skills among Peace Corps staff and host country counterparts representing multisectoral interests.

The workshop began with a formal, structured opening, which included speeches and panels on the first day. When space was opened on the second day, "A weight was lifted," says Anita Friedman, Programming Officer for the Inter-America Region. "It was liberating. People were energized. They were committed to the agenda because they created it. They moved in and out of sessions if they were not getting what they needed." Juan Coward, Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD) for Urban Youth, agrees. "We had a good response, a lot of cooperation from the participants . . . they took charge and went to the sessions."

The third day was spent on previously scheduled field trips to youth projects. Combining field visits with Open Space presents a particular challenge. The visits require advanced scheduling of a kind that is not typically part of

"Open Space provides an ideal situation for everyone to be happy at the conference."

—Juan Coward

the Open Space process. The visits that best suited the needs of this group required long bus rides. Paul Sully, Youth Development Coordinator and co-organizer of the workshop, proposed to experiment with "keeping the space open" during the field trips. This meant that participants were invited to convene sessions during the bus rides to and from field sites. Two groups planned to use the bus time for Open Space sessions. One of the sessions actually took place. "While the site visit is structured, the time spent traveling on the bus was 'free' or 'open'," Sully notes. "One could read, rest, have random conversations or discuss, 'Open-Space' style, topics of common interest. The restrictions on such use of space were fixed seats and the high level of engine and ambient noise. A small group of three or four people did convene and have a discussion." Sully considered it a successful experiment. Friedman has her doubts, "I wonder how much discussion could have taken place given the noise."

On the final day of the workshop, the participants reconvened at the hotel for the last Open Space session, some more structured action planning activities, and a cultural event. Juan Coward concludes, "Open Space provides an ideal situation for everyone to be happy at the conference." Though the field visits were rated as the "most useful" activities by half of the par-

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"OPEN SPACE IS A VEHICLE that allows the connections to be made which mirror the real world challenges of self-advocacy, communication, and collaboration."

—Paul Sully

ticipants and Open Space was mentioned by only a quarter, the participant evaluations specific to Open Space were positive. Comments such as "gave everyone the opportunity to participate in what they felt important to them and interested them," "total participation," and "allowed one to be flexible" are typical. Two people requested clearer explanations of the process and topics to be discussed.

Sully concludes, "In Peace Corps we are challenged to construct organizational (Region, the field, OTAPS) and sectoral (Environment, Health, Education, Youth) connections to more appropriately match or meet the programming and training challenges of the real world. Open Space is a vehicle that allows the connections to be made which mirror the real world challenges of self-advocacy, communication, and collaboration . . . . From Headquarters . . . we try to make extra efforts to utilize the skills and knowledge of our field staff. In Open Space, we are all teachers and students."

Advice and Lessons Learned

- Be sure people think twice before merging sessions. The benefits of merging may be outweighed by the size of the group. There also may be a lack of common understanding of the topic because of the diversity of issues that people are trying to address. (Friedman)
- Expect Open Space sessions to be conversations and not prepared presentations as we have come to expect at traditional workshops. Conveners won't necessarily know how to frame questions, direct discussions, and use newsprint to collect information. (Friedman)
- Consider allowing conveners to describe their sessions in greater detail before posting them on the bulletin board. Allow them to create a mini-syllabus or oral presentation. This will make it more likely that people attending the session will have similar expectations. (Friedman)
- Pay attention to the space you choose. "We used a small hotel with small rooms. It may be difficult for people to move from session to session if they have to leave a small space. Next time I would look for something more open: maybe two big rooms near each other." (Coward)
- It is very important that the documentation that people receive before the workshop be well written. It should describe and reassure. Most people have not had the experience of coming to a workshop with two and a half days of open agenda. Tell them, "Don't worry. Things will work out." (Coward)
- Experiment with "keeping the space open" even if you need to schedule other sessions, such as field trips, in the midst of Open Space. Participants can be invited to meet during bus trips or in the evenings. (Sully)

Putting Responsibility in its Place

Environmental Education Workshops

Poland, September 1996 • Kyrgyz Republic, October 1996

This article describes the experience of planners and participants in two environmental education workshops in which Open Space was used in different ways. In Poland participants shared specific concepts with each other. In Kyrgyz Republic, Open Space invited people to explore questions and concerns with one another at the end of a structured workshop.

The Education, Environment, and Water and Sanitation Sectors used Open Space to tap the talents of participants in two subregional programming and training conferences on Environmental Education and Environmental Health. At the Environmental Education TIPS (Technical Information Packages) Conference in Poland, Elizabeth Macdonald, Education Sector Specialist, Jamie Watts, Environmental Education Specialist, and Joan Haley, North America Environmental Education Specialist, used Open Space for an "instructional day" of a four-day workshop for Peace Corps staff, Volunteers and host-country counterparts in Eastern Europe.

Macdonald explains: "In this conference, the workshop was structured according to the four-step experiential learning cycle, with the first day being devoted to the 'motivational' segment, which consisted of reviewing the key concepts of Environmental Education and sharing why we were all there; the second day was the 'instructional day' in which people shared information about how their projects and local governments are addressing the environmental education needs in their respective countries; the third day was the 'practice day' in which people had hands-on experience practicing what they had learned; and the fourth and final day was devoted to 'application', doing action planning for how to apply what had been learned in the conference. In this framework, we decided to use Open Space during the instructional day, recognizing that the participants had much to teach each other, and that Open Space was the most appropriate way to allow for the instructional learning to take place. Throughout the workshop, we reviewed that TIPS materials, and assisted participants in becoming familiar with them and how they might use them in their own Environmental Education projects."

In Kyrgyz Republic, Macdonald, Peter Maille, Environment Sector Specialist, and Joy Barret, Water and Sanitation Specialist, conducted a three and a half day training of trainers for Volunteers, Trainers, and APCDs on integrating themes of environment and environmental health into TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) teaching using "Community Content-Based Instruction." Open Space was used as a final segment of the workshop to explore in greater depth programming and training implications of using this model. It was preceded by two days of sessions designed to

"Open Space is what true adult education is: nothing is there that does not meet at least one participant's need; people are not put on the spot for an answer; questions of true interest are raised and answered."

—Gabriella Kaszas

present the environmental education model and give participants some "hands on" experience using the tools with students and planning lessons of their own.

"In OTAPS, we have been experimenting with different ways of incorporating Open Space into our Programming and Training conferences," notes Macdonald. "In the Poland conference we used Open Space for the 'instructional day' because Open Space is a forum by which people can legitimately learn from one another. In Kyrgyz Republic, on the other hand, we put Open Space at the end because we knew that people had questions and concerns, and had a variety of issues related to what we had presented that they needed time and space to explore with one another. Our intent was not to resolve any issues for them, but to give them a group forum to reflect on what they had learned and what it might mean to them. "

Gabriella Kaszas, a participant in the Poland workshop and TEFL Program Manager in Hungary, was delighted with the Open Space process. "We have talked a lot about adult non-formal education in Peace Corps," she writes. "Most training events are designed based on participants' needs. Still, all these events have a clear direction, that of the facilitator's. Open Space is what true adult education is: nothing is there that does not meet at least one participant's need; people are not put on the spot for an answer; questions of true interest are raised and answered; if you are very experienced in a field, and do not want to sit through a session that describes the issue for beginners, you will surely be able to find something going on at the same time that is new and interesting for you. Of course, you may find more than one session that you would like/need to participate in. In traditional training set-ups it is not possible to do so . . . you will miss something. Open Space is really flexible, on the length of individual sessions and attendance, which makes it possible to attend more than one session in one time slot and which frees you of the sense of guilt you might have when you leave a session before it 'officially' ends. I love the rule of 'two feet.'"

"[OPEN SPACE] IS PARTICULARLY good at bringing up issues. But it may not be so good at resolving them. This remains a challenge . . . Perhaps [this could be done] by targeting key sessions for follow-up discussion after Open Space."

—Peter Maille

Luiggi Munoz, TEFL APCD in Poland and a participant in the same workshop points out, "These are heavy duty conferences. The days are full. People are tired. Open Space is a very relaxing way of doing business." He appreciated that Open Space allows professionals to use a flexible structure to choose how and when to interact with each other. He especially liked that conveners were held accountable for sharing what was discussed at their sessions by taking and writing up notes. "If that is not done, I don't see a lot of purpose to Open Space." He also advises planners to pay attention to the placement of Open Space. "Don't do Open Space on the first day [if you have traditional sessions you want to hold after that]. People will want more. [If you need to hold structured sessions after Open Space] think about the space people will be going back into. Look for a room with a big window, or schedule longer breaks."

Kaszas offered suggestions for opening Open Space; she advises against READING directly from a script. "On the one hand, the instructions [read by the facilitator] were really detailed and easy to follow, and it made sure that everybody has a clear idea about what we had to do. On the other hand, it sounded too official for the atmosphere, and too long for listening. I'm not an auditory learner. Instructions and how they are delivered can be tailored to the audience's experience and learning style."

Peter Maille, on the other hand, cautions trainers to follow Harrison Owen's suggestions closely for how to introduce Open Space. Maille notes that in Kyrgyz Republic, "[The marketplace] was 'low energy' at first." He attributes the low energy to timing (at the end of the week and a week-long mid-service conference ahead) and to the lack of time he had to prepare his opening remarks on Open Space. "Don't underestimate the importance of the first 30 minutes!" he advises. Despite a slow start, both Macdonald and Maille agree that the energy picked up and the discussions that happened were good. Participants came up with simpler language to describe the model, which was very useful to them in the following week when they were teaching Volunteers and counterparts.

Maille also notes that in his experience, "[Open Space] is particularly good at bringing up issues, but it may not be so good at resolving them. This remains a challenge. It will take some more experimentation and experience to address this. Perhaps [this could be done] by targeting key sessions for follow-up discussion after Open Space."

Advice and Lessons Learned

1. As Harrison Owen says: Make sure the right people are there; people who have energy for the theme. And follow the Open Space principles. (Maille)
2. Pay attention to the placement of Open Space. Don't hold it on the first day and then schedule structured days after it. If you must hold more sessions after Open Space make sure the room(s) you use have windows, and schedule long breaks. (Munoz)
3. Don't underestimate the importance of the first 30 minutes! Be sure the introduction to Open Space is clear, and creates suspense and excitement for the process. Use Harrison Owen's suggestions in Open Space Technology for the opening remarks. (Macdonald and Maille)
4. Don't READ the introduction to the audience. (Kaszas)
5. Use a big wall and large sheets of the paper so the session titles are easily visible. (Macdonald)
6. Be sure there is encouragement and physical space for lots of concurrent sessions. It creates a feeling of options. (Maille)
7. Emphasize the importance of taking notes and writing them up for the proceedings. (Munoz)
8. Keep in mind that the "talking stick" closing activity may not work for all participants. Some will not be comfortable speaking in front of a large group. (Kaszas)
9. Open Space is a legitimate forum for people to share their experiences and lessons learned and can help a group further explore a complex issue. (Macdonald)
10. Open Space may be better at bringing up issues than resolving them. Consider experimenting with follow-up sessions for key issues. (Maille)

Opening Space for Volunteer Support

Benin/Togo,
August 1995
Central African Republic,
September 1995
Western Samoa,
October 1996

The workshops described below provide some good examples of the power of Open Space to encourage communication across culture and hierarchy. In addition, the planners of two of the workshops asked every group that convened to produce a list of strategies and recommendations and the names of those who were responsible for the implementation of action steps.

"You are about to enter a marketplace. You have limited resources. Spend them where you can get what you really want."

This is how the facilitators of the Office of Special Services (OSS) Counterparts Agencies Workshop in the Central African Republic (CAR) encouraged 30 Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and representatives of counterpart agencies to engage their energy during the two days of Open Space. A similar workshop had been held in Benin/Togo the week before. Both were convened to address issues of Volunteer support and safety. OSS was also involved in an Open Space event in Western Samoa to improve the quality of "intentional helping" communications among youth and between youth and adults.

The CAR workshop was designed to be a high profile event that would increase Peace Corps' visibility to garner support to address Volunteer safety and security issues. Lynn Foden, then Country Director, expressed surprise and delight that both the Chief of Police and the Head of the Gendarmes not only came to the conference, but stayed the entire time. "People told us that they would never stay for the whole workshop." Clearly they found it worth their while. Bringing civil servants to a workshop that included Open Space was cause for anxiety on the part of some of the planners. The National Chief of Police and Head of the Gendarmes attended the workshop in uniform. Could others in the room speak freely to them? How could the planners facilitate the most effective conversations across cultures? How could Volunteers be encouraged to play a larger role than they typically do? Michael O'Neill, from the Office of Special Services and one of

"The Chief of Police and the Head of the Gendarmes not only came to the conference, but stayed the entire time."

—Lynn Foden

the facilitators, urged the planning committee to chose Open Space because of the diversity of the participants. Pauline Voga, then the APCD for Health in CAR and a participant in numerous Open Space conferences, points out "Open Space is useful in these situations because people have their own characters and their own needs." As predicted, "not only did people participate," says O'Neill. "They really got into it!"

None of these three conferences was conducted entirely in Open Space. In Western Samoa, Open Space was preceded by a day of introductory sessions, which included panel presentations by young people and youth development workers and a talk by a Samoan social worker who described the big cultural and economic picture in the region. The fourth day was dedicated to site visits, the last to action planning. On the first day of the CAR workshop participants brainstormed what they meant by Volunteer support and participated in a role playing exercise to examine who is responsible for addressing Volunteer support issues. O'Neill and Foden believe that this was important in setting the stage and giving participants a common understanding of some of the issues. In a variant on the usual process, participants were asked to frame their issue in the form of a question. After questions had been posted on sheets of flip chart paper, other participants were invited to add their own related ideas onto these sheets before signing up for sessions.

"WE HAD THE RIGHT combination of people, including high level people and a well respected prefet (governor). They took public responsibility for their actions. They were not just doing it for us. They were doing it for their peers."

—Lynn Foden

In the CAR and Benin/Togo conferences, the planners were clear from the start that the gathering was not just going to be an opportunity to "get together and talk" about the issues. The participants at each Open Space session were expected to generate a list of strategies and recommendations that detailed what would be done, who would take responsibility for doing it, when it would be completed and how. In addition to including the action steps in the proceedings, each group presented its plan at a "report out" session after the Open Space portion of the workshop had concluded. These were consolidated into a planning calendar. O'Neill thinks that the report out was a crucial part of the process. "It validated the issues and allowed people to get credit for their ideas and plans."

In the Benin/Togo workshop, outcomes included the publication of a newsletter and the revision of the cross cultural portion of the PST. In CAR, it led to the Chief of Police and Head of the Gendarmes providing each Volunteer with a letter introducing them to the local police and *gendarmes* at their posts. This did not necessarily prevent crimes from happening, but it helped when Volunteers reported them to the local authorities. In CAR, the conference also produced an action planning calendar. "For the most part, people did what they said they were going to do . . . . We had the right combination of people, including high level people and a well respected *prefet* (governor). They took public responsibility for their actions. They were not just doing it for us. They were doing it for their peers." Foden believes that the Peace Corps staff and Volunteers learned more about the importance of formalities, letters of introduction, and the timing of site preparation. She was also pleased that the workshop allowed Volunteers to "learn that support isn't just the APCD or other staff sitting there with you. APCD's are supporting Volunteers when they make protocol visits to government officials." Open Space contributed flexibility to this conference. "It gave greater detail and ownership. We wouldn't have known how to assign topics and groups. We got information and commitments we probably wouldn't have gotten otherwise."

Advice and Lessons Learned

- Consider Open Space when you want to bring together a diverse group of participants with a variety of needs. (Foden, O'Neill, Voga)

- Be sure you have a clear theme. (O'Neill)

- Choose a credible, dynamic facilitator who can speak the local language, particularly if the workshop includes people who are not familiar with Open Space or Peace Corps. Jaco Mbessima served in this role for the CAR workshop and was able to judge when the audience needed more explanations and when it was time to move on. (Foden)

- Make sure you explain Open Space to participants before they come to the conference, but don't try to explain too much more when you open the space. Give a concrete example and then just do it. (Foden)

- Don't be afraid to ask participants to focus on strategies and action after they have discussed the issues. (Foden, O'Neill)

- Try to make the proceedings available at the end of each day. Problems with the photocopy machines prevented this from happening in Western Samoa. (Steve Palmer, Special Services Officer)

- Be flexible with the scheduling. Nine Open Space slots were scheduled initially in Western Samoa. It soon became clear that sessions were running over and that this was too many for the two days. Participants and planners adjusted the agenda to create seven slots, each from one hour to one and a half hours long. (Palmer)

- Can Open Space be used for skill development? Perhaps if they are provided with a clear description of what would be offered ahead of time. (Palmer)

- Use space creatively. In Western Samoa, the conference was held on a sand floor, under a thatched roof, in a building without walls, with session topics and titles posted on mats strung between poles. The mats that were used for the "wall" were not porous. This prevented air from circulating through the main space. Using a more porous material (fishnet?) on which to hang the session titles would make the environment cooler. Or perhaps sessions could be posted on a circular structure in the middle of the room. (Palmer)

Staff Retreat in Open Space

Ecuador, July 1996

This event is a good example of how Open Space can be used with a small work group and the benefits it can provide for programming, team building, and morale.

Jean Seigle, Country Director for Ecuador, used Open Space for a two-day staff retreat. "We are a large post. We had a lot to get done . . . a lot of policy and management issues to take care of . . . . As a former training officer for the Inter-America Region, I have an investment in staff development and training. I put forward the idea of doing a retreat in Open Space . . . . I was saying to the staff, by turning things over to them, "I trust you.' I was turning over control." They were receptive. Seigle attributes this in part to their prior experience with Open Space. "Many of our staff had attended conferences, a component of which was Open Space."

In preparation for the retreat they began collecting issues during staff meetings. "We identified things we couldn't deal with in our Monday morning meetings but wanted to. Some were passions, others were 'passion on command' or issues [the staff] recognized they needed to deal with for the administrative health of the organi zation." On the morning of the first day of the retreat they gathered "to set priorities and rearrange stickees." As is often the case when a small group uses Open Space, the entire group decided to stay together during the two days. Seigle notes, however, that unusual duets and trios formed to co-lead sessions.

What were the results? Seigle explains, "There were tremendous outcomes and pay off . . . . The consensus that was reached was legitimate . . . . It was a success both programmatically and for team building and morale. It merited the investment in empowering my staff . . . I am a fan!"

"We identified things we couldn't deal with in our Monday morning meetings but wanted to. Some were passions, others were 'passion on command' or issues [the staff] recognized they needed to deal with for the administrative health of the organization."

—Jean Seigle

Advice and Lessons Learned

- If you are going to use it, put your money where your mouth is. Be prepared to accept the outcomes . . . It would be hypocritical to do otherwise . . . [Our retreat] was philosophical Open Space as well as physical Open Space! (Seigle)
- Leaders can set parameters up front before opening the issues up to the staff. (Seigle)

OPEN[illegible]IG IN[illegible]ERMITTENT SPACES

National Associa[illegible]mental Education Conference
San Francisco, Novem[illegible]6

This article describes Open Space sessions that were held for Peace Corps staff between workshops and activities at a very large professional conference. It also addresses a concern, expressed by some, that Open Space sessions are not structured enough and rely too heavily on free-flowing dialogue.

In November 1996, 30 Peace Corps staff and counterparts from the Inter-America, Asia Pacific, and Africa Regions and staff from Washington, DC, attended the National Association for Environmental Education Conference in San Francisco. So did approximately 1500 other people. "I have been to this conference before. I knew we could be lost there," says Jamie Watts, Environment Sector Specialist. "Unless we set up some way to come together we might not even see each other .... We wanted to give people an opportunity to come together around Peace Corps specific issues ... but also give them flexibility."

Open Space principles seemed appropriate, but Watts and the other coordinators (Jacob Fillion, Environment Sector Specialist, and Chris Arthur, Country Desk Assistant for the Inter-America Region and Environment Coordinator) faced particular challenges in planning the Peace Corps workshop in the context of a conference. "We were afraid that after the preconference workshop and the conference itself, people would be out of energy .... There were also increased costs associated with adding additional days," Watts explains. So they looked for times and places within the larger conference program when Peace Corps participants could convene and facilitate sessions of specific interest to Peace Corps. The result was ten sessions on the following topics: Municipal Environmental Management, Conflict Resolution, Environment Sector Report, Youth Development and the Environment, Where Nature has been Pushed too Far, Professional Development of Peace Corps Staff, How to Initiate an Environmental Education Program, Environmental Education Monitoring and Evaluation, Environment Education Resources and Materials, and The Messages We Send. "The sessions I went to were excellent," says Watts, "As coordinators of the Peace Corps participation, we would never have been able to imagine and manage this range of topics if we had tried to develop the agenda ourselves."

"TELL PARTICIPANTS: 'THINK of themes for which you have passion, things that are worrying you, things that are in your heart.'"

—Francisco Garces

Francisco Garces, Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD) for Natural Resources in Ecuador, was a participant in this conference and other Open Space events. He is a strong supporter of Open Space and is particularly impressed by the reactions of many host-country counterparts to Open Space at this and other events. "Using this method, they could come up with items for discussion that were really relevant ... that were really inside their own heads .... They were very surprised at having been exposed to this revolutionary, democratic methodology, which is completely the opposite from traditional methodology in which they are passive."

Garces found having the Peace Corps Open Space sessions woven throughout the larger conference a bit distracting. "There were so many things going on it was hard to concentrate .... It wasn't bad, but it wasn't as good as it could have been [if the Peace Corps Open Space sessions had been grouped together after the conference]." In their feedback, 15 participants said the sessions were effective, five said they were somewhat effective, two said they were not effective.

At the end of the Open Space sessions, Garces convened and facilitated a wrap-up session to help participants determine next steps for natural resources management in Latin America. One of the recommendations was to take a closer look at the urban environment. "We were already considering this, but this session confirmed how important this is for us." When asked how Open Space has made a difference Garces responds, "It has made a difference to me. It has confirmed my deepest vision that there are many methodologies out there that we can use. I pass this on to my Volunteers."

"ENCOURAGE CONVENERS TO structure their sessions if they think that it will help them achieve their objectives."

—Jamie Watts

Advice and Lessons Learned

- Be sure that participants know that prepared presentations are appropriate in Open Space. Watts convened a session that was structured and brought someone in to present with her. Most Open Space sessions tend to be spontaneous discussions. Some participants complained about this. Encourage conveners to structure their sessions if they think that it will help them achieve their objectives. (Watts)

- Consider scheduling a structured session at the end to gather the group's ideas around specific topics and begin planning next steps. (Watts and Garces)

- Say to participants "Think of themes for which you have passion, things that are worrying you, things that are in your heart." Sometimes people submit themes because they think they have to. This is not in the spirit of Open Space. (Garces)

Opening Small Spaces: Less than One Day

Open Space is not always the appropriate methodology for an entire workshop or conference, and opinions differ as to whether it can be used for skills training. The conveners of the short Open Space events described in this section have, for the most part, decided to combine it with other training methodologies.

Though Harrison Owen advises against trying to hold structured events after having opened the space, many Peace Corps trainers have done this successfully. Perhaps brief Open Space events can serve as a respite from more structured activities. In one case, conveners scheduled a previously unplanned afternoon of Open Space when the energy of the group was flagging during a Pre-Service Training Workshop (PST). Trainees appreciated the change of pace and the opportunity to examine their own issues before going back to the structured training. In workshops, Open Space can allow small groups of participants to examine issues that are important to them but not necessarily to the whole group.

This section ends with a description of how Open Space has inspired some changes in the structuring of brief meetings. These kinds of changes may seem insignificant. Remember, however, the proverbial butterfly flapping its wings and causing a storm on the other side of the world. Time will tell how profound some of these small changes may be.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Open Space at Language Coordinators Annual Conferences

For the past two years, Language Training Specialist Doug Gilzow and his colleagues have used Open Space as part of annual conferences for Language Coordinators in Anglophone and Francophone Africa, the Asia-Pacific, and the ECAM regions. He and Sumithra Mapatuna, Language Coordinator in Sri Lanka, share their experiences with Open Space and provide specific insights about when to use it, how to launch it, and the effect of physical space on participation in the conference.

Before the week-long Language Coordinators annual conferences, Doug Gilzow does an extensive needs assessment. Prior to the 1996 conference in the Asia-Pacific region, for example, Gilzow asked participants what proportion they wanted of three possible training approaches:

- "top-down" sessions, planned and presented in advance for the whole group by experts;
- project-focused sessions, where participants form groups to produce a product (e.g., a plan for integration or a workshop design) in the course of the conference;
- Open Space.

Gilzow does not use Open Space if his needs assessment reveals a common high priority need for the group, as it did in the case of the Asia-Pacific conference. Participants in the conference wanted more "top down" sessions and some Open Space. Gilzow designed a workshop in which they spent most of their time in formal sessions learning about "self directed language learning," with Open Space provided for a morning in the middle of the week.

Gilzow does not use Open Space if his needs assessment reveals a common high priority need for the group.

One half day of Open Space in the middle of a conference has been typical for the Language Coordinators conferences, where Gilzow shares facilitation with a host-country national who is responsible for the Open Space event. He encourages the group to begin suggesting possible Open Space topics early in the workshop to "stimulate their thinking and allow people to change their minds. But the agenda is never finalized until the morning of the Open Space sessions." In some cases, for reasons of time, the conference facilitators have consolidated sessions, assigned times and locations, and determined "ring leaders" for the sessions. At the Asia-Pacific conference, however, Gilzow left the participants to work out the consolidation, timing, and location of morning sessions within 9:00 to 10:30 and 10:45 to 12:15 time slots.

Sumithra Mapatuna, Language Coordinator in Sri Lanka and the Open Space facilitator for the Asia-Pacific conference, stresses the importance of giving instructions in a "simple and short way" and emphasizing "passion bounded by responsibility" at the beginning of Open Space. "As there is no leader to conduct the session, the participants should take the responsibility of utilizing the time given for this session." She also notes, however, that people have not always taken advantage of the law of two feet. At one conference participants did not move from one session to another but, "that did not mean all were contributing or actively partici-

pating. As usual, newcomers [participants who joined the Peace Corps recently] were passive listeners and there were some situations when the convener became the preacher. That is why I recommend using this technique with an experienced group in a particular field."

Gilzow has found Open Space to be extremely useful in ensuring that everyone's agenda gets raised and discussed even if only a few participants are interested in it. It helps avoid "the tyranny of the majority." Participants will sometimes come with ideas and materials to share that will not necessarily be of interest to the whole group. He encourages such participants to offer their ideas during Open Space sessions.

The write-ups are a good way for participants to share information. One group wrote up language teaching games and tricks. "We never would have taken an entire session with the whole group for this," he said, but everyone could benefit from it through the proceedings.

According to Gilzow, one of the great advantages of Open Space is its positive contribution to morale at the workshop. "The first time we used it there was a lot of excitement. The second time the interest was still very high. People know they will be able to focus on what they care about."

Advice and Lessons Learned

- Open Space Technology should not always be used as a solution. Be sure that participants are capable of handling this tool before using it in any situation .... Organizers must consider the audience and the contents of the workshop. I would not use OST in a Training of Trainers workshop with brand new instructors, or when there is a mix of old and new teachers where the old heads ... end up as headmasters. (Mapatuna)

- Introduce Open Space briefly, clearly and concisely. (Mapatuna)

- Emphasize "passion bounded by responsibility" so that participants realize that if they raise an issue they must take responsibility for the session on that issue. (Mapatuna)

- Be aware that "the law of two feet" can be disruptive when it becomes "the law of twenty feet." In one session at the Asia - Pacific conference, several groups were meeting in corners of one large room. One session drew the attention of all the people in the room who then left their initial sessions, creating the need for last minute adjustments on the part of the conveners. (Gilzow)

- Pay attention to the effects of the space you are using. At another conference a convener had to move from the fifteenth to the second floor in a hotel without elevators, when most of the participants decided to attend his session at the last minute. This greatly reduced the time and energy everyone had for the session. (Gilzow)

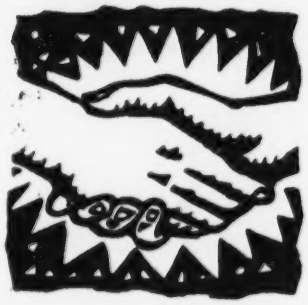
- Don't let using Open Space replace a needs assessment. Participants will feel cheated when Open Space seems to be substituting for preparation . (Gilzow)

- Use Open Space when you believe everyone's opinion is as good as everyone else's or when you know that most of the resources reside with the participants. (Gilzow)

- If you decide to use Open Space, have faith in the expertise of the participants. (Gilzow)

A Sign of Respect

Opening Space in PSTs and ISTs
Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gambia



Associate Peace Corps Directors (APCDs) and other Peace Corps staff throughout the regions have been using Open Space as part of In-Service Training (IST) and Pre-Service Training (PST) for several years. The Open Space portions of the workshops described below typically last less than one day and are often preceded or followed by skills training or other kinds of structured sessions.

When Eliane Dogore, APCD for Health in Côte d'Ivoire, uses Open Space in her PSTs, Trainees often bring up questions about Peace Corps, and collaboration between host-country counterparts and Volunteers. They may also share their fears and anxieties about their upcoming responsibilities. Typically, she devotes a half day (or a half day plus two hours) to Open Space. She will spend one half hour reviewing the four principles and the law of two feet. Then participants propose topics. Sometimes, because of time constraints, she limits the number of topics, helps participants negotiate and combine sessions, and has them vote for the ones they think are most important. They may spend only an hour in sessions before coming back to a large group discussion. She still thinks it's worth it. Open Space "can create a style of discussion with counterparts that is sometimes completely different. It helps people discover each other in another way . . . and know each other better than before."

Yamai Secka-Jack, APCD for Health and Education in the Gambia, describes an experience when Open Space helped revive the flagging energy of a group of Trainees. "We had planned to use Open Space at the end of the PST [the afternoons of the last two days], but half way through the training it was very hot and humid and we had a lot of communication issues. We met as a training group and decided to use Open Space for a day to break the monotony." It worked. Trainees were able to focus on what they wanted, and then moved on to complete the rest of the training.

"I don't use Open Space in PSTs," says Bob Schmidt, the APCD for Programming in Ethiopia, "because I know more than they do. For the past two years we have used Open Space when they come back for the Reconnect Workshop. [At that point] they know more about teaching in [their villages] than I do." He has been pleased with the results, "Every topic I wanted covered was covered without my having to bring it up . . . . And one of our big new programming efforts was born at an IST Open Space session." It is a mentoring program for girls inspired by the American "Take your Daughter to Work Day."

During IST, Open Space helps to energize people. "At the end of ISTs," says Eliane Dogore, "people are tired. When you do Open Space they do not feel they were prisoners. They have

"I don't use Open Space in PSTs because I know more than they do. For the past two years we have used Open Space when they come back for the Reconnect Workshop. [At that point] they know more about teaching in [their villages] than I do."

—Bob Schmidt

had time to share." In the Gambia, Yamai Secka-Jack schedules formal sessions on topics the IST survey reveals are of interest to many of the Volunteers. Then she uses Open Space for two two-hour sessions to allow participants to examine topics of their choosing in greater depth. "Volunteers like to have options," she point out, "Open Space provides this for them."

Steve Marma, El Salvador's APCD for Small Business Development and Water and Sanitation, used Open Space for one afternoon during an IST in November 1996. Sessions convened included: garbage; data bank of local resources, special talents, or information available to PCVs; corruption on a small scale by NGOs and government agencies; how to promote change of cultural habits; graduate school and vacations outside of El Salvador. Marma acknowledges that it was difficult not to throw out this last topic, "but I did relinquish power to the group." He points out that though these participants showed some immaturity by using the Open Space for this kind of topic, "they did not participate [in other sessions], so they did not disrupt the groups."

Bob Schmidt acknowledges that he had to accept that not everyone thought certain topics were as important as he did, and that those participants who didn't come to groups he thought they needed to come to, "were often the people most in need of those sessions. However, they probably wouldn't have gotten the point even if they had been there. I'd still use it again; it models the ideas of empowerment and critical thinking skills we preach to our PCVs."

Yamai Secka-Jack described similar experiences. "If you have some unmotivated Trainees, they will use the law of two feet [and not attend any sessions]. It seems to me that those are the Trainees who . . . are now the ones having problems in the field." She recommends describing to participants the benefits of Open Space, so that they can use it to their advantage and think before applying the Law of Two Feet.

"We had planned to use Open Space at the end of the PST, but half way through the training it was very hot and humid and we had a lot of communication issues. We met as a training group and decided to use Open Space for a day to break the monotony."

—Yamai Secka-Jack

Steve Marma points out the limitation of using Open Space in groups that include only Volunteers: "The use of one population group, specifically Volunteers, limited the diversity of our discussions. This should be well thought out because Volunteers get together informally and talk about these issues anyway. The involvement of other population groups (counterparts, host country agencies, USAID, etc.) would have enhanced Open Space."

For the most part, evaluations from Volunteers indicate their appreciation of Open Space. After an IST in Ethiopia in early 1997, participants were asked "What did you like?" Open Space was cited by 14 of the 23 participants who filled out the evaluation; more often than any other feature of the workshop. "People like it," wrote one participant, "and the freedom to decide is a sign of respect."

Advice and Lessons Learned

- Even if you don't have much time, try to find a small space for Open Space. It's a good experience. Let people know what they are going to do beforehand and encourage them to prepare by thinking about subjects in advance. (Degore)

- One-hour sessions per topic are a good length of time. Half an hour is too short. (Marma)

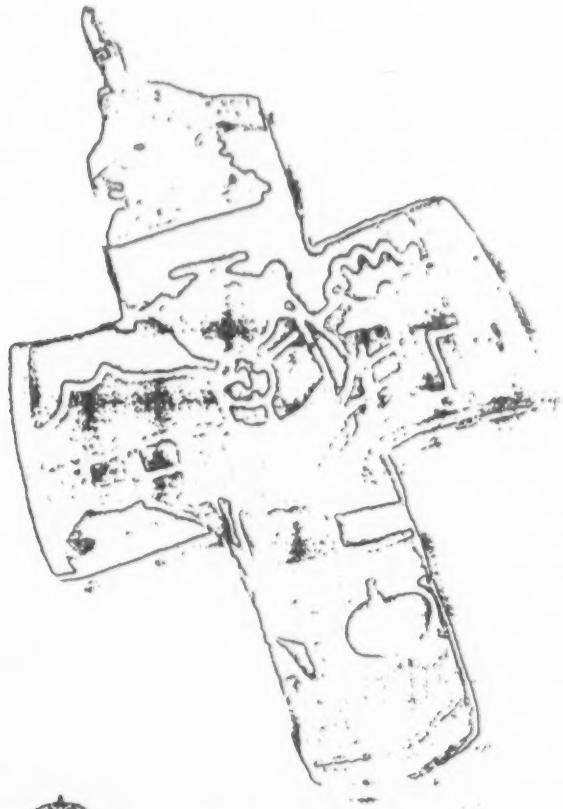
- Open Space can be of limited value with homogeneous groups. When working with Volunteers try to include counterparts, USAID, and host country agencies. (Marma)

- Open Space is advantageous in long and/or intensive training when people are losing interest. (Secka-Jack)

- Open Space works best with motivated Trainees. Explain the process and the objectives to the Volunteers and look for ways to motivate them. Point out the advantages and opportunities of Open Space. (Secka-Jack, Marma)

- When motivating them doesn't work, recognize that Open Space can prevent unmotivated Trainees from disrupting the group. (Marma, Schmidt)

- If you are going to do it, do it all the way. You have to trust that people are learning even when they don't look like they are. (Schmidt)



Open Space at Overseas Staff Training

Martha Bozman shares her experience using Open Space during Overseas Staff Training and the adaptations she and her colleagues have made. She suggests that for recurring conferences planners might consider "connecting Open Space sessions over time," by sharing notes from similar sessions of previous conferences.

For more than a year we have been using Open Space regularly as part of the Overseas Staff Training program. This is a month-long training session designed to prepare staff for their responsibilities in project design and management, Volunteers training, and Volunteer and staff management. We begin by setting the context with a few days on development and how Peace Corps works in development today, and during the month we also cover position specific content areas, special topics, and agency resources. Open Space is used as a final part of the module on Volunteer Training.

Before using Open Space in the training module, my colleague Michael Mercil introduced its use in the programming module. The schedule didn't always allow Open Space to be used—it was one possible alternative depending on time used for other activities—and we decided it fit better with the training module in any case.

In any Overseas Staff Training we have a mix of American and Foreign Service National (FSN) staff. The U. S. staff members are generally new to their position, may be new to Peace Corps, or are returning after time elsewhere; FSN staff may have been working for Peace Corps for some years. Our group size is from a low of perhaps 18 to a high of 30 participants (plus trainers and sometimes visiting staff).

"[Open Space] is another way to be learners and facilitators together."

—Martha Bozman

By closing the Volunteer training module with Open Space, we allow participants choices about what else they need to know or want to talk about regarding training. It also gives participants a chance to experience a replicable model that they may find useful and choose to use in future. We offer the lesson plan for Open Space (we offer all our lesson plans, in fact), and have Owen's Open Space book on the resource table.

We do Open Space just for an afternoon. We use about half an hour for the opening/bulletin board/marketplace. We do topic and room postings for two sessions of 90 minutes each with a break in between (after, of course, recognizing that in Open Space the times are only suggestions), then come back together for a debriefing of Open Space. Following that we end the afternoon by spending a few minutes closing out the module as a whole.

Open Space is generally appreciated by participants. The immediate discussions can be quite helpful and productive on topics of concern to them. The model is of interest, for use particularly in in-service training. Incorporating some Open Space sessions in pre-service training and close of service workshops has been suggested. Supervisor's conferences are sometimes thought to be more uncertain, as participants may question if this would work with more host country national participants, if they are less accus-

tomed to American ways and more apt to expect to learn from a lecture. In some groups, other participants can relate tales of great experiences with Open Space and HCN participants, among other uses. While I don't have solid information about longer term effects, occasional anecdotes indicate that participants are using Open Space at times.

Our adaptation of Open Space includes loosening up on the written report outs. We suggest but do not require that notes be made. We do strongly suggest that our group members informally share with one another. Since the group has two more weeks of training, there are plenty of chances to check in with someone from a session you missed and get briefed. Since our group is small, participants can remember or easily locate someone from a particular session. This is a luxury few conferences afford.

It has occurred to me that we could connect Open Space sessions over time, as some session topics are one-of-a-kind but others recur; so if we kept notes for "making the most of homestays for cross-cultural learning," we could add them to the next Overseas Staff Training's session notes on "How to make homestays work."

Some participants have experienced Open Space before OST, in another Peace Corps setting. This doesn't lessen the value of the discussions for them. Some participants have said that they would now try it, when before they wouldn't have felt comfortable. Perhaps our very transparent and debriefed use of the model gives confidence. Some, of course, still do not feel inclined to try it after OST. On at least one occasion, a participant commented at the end of the afternoon with some surprise, "Oh, that's what Open Space is supposed to be. When we tried it at home, it wasn't like this" (I regret I didn't follow this up afterwards to find out just what they had done as Open Space).

"THERE IS PERHAPS A DANGER inherent in Open Space—that it looks so formless that people may do anything unstructured and call it by the name. I believe its a flexible form, yet I think there are ideas or principles embedded in the "technology" that should be understood and respected as adaptations are made."

—Martha Bozman

Perhaps an inherent danger in Open Space is that it looks so formless that people may do anything unstructured and call it Open Space. I believe it is a flexible form, yet I think there are ideas or principles embedded in the "technology" that should be understood and respected as adaptations are made. Some people might disagree with our brief use of and our looseness about notes; I think these are adaptations that work for our setting. But if adaptations go too far, they can lose what is useful about Open Space.

We like the model in part because it is a way to express in the training design our vast respect for the wisdom and experience that participants, our colleagues, bring to OST. It is also another way to be learners and facilitators together, as we aim to be throughout training.

Opening the Space in Meetings

Paul Sully, Youth Program Coordinator in the Peace Corps' Office of Training and Program Support, is one of the agency's biggest proponents of Open Space. In addition to using the method for youth development workshops in Tonga, Western Samoa, and Costa Rica, Sully used Open Space principles in the planning and follow up meetings for a large one-day event on youth in Washington, D. C., in April 1996.

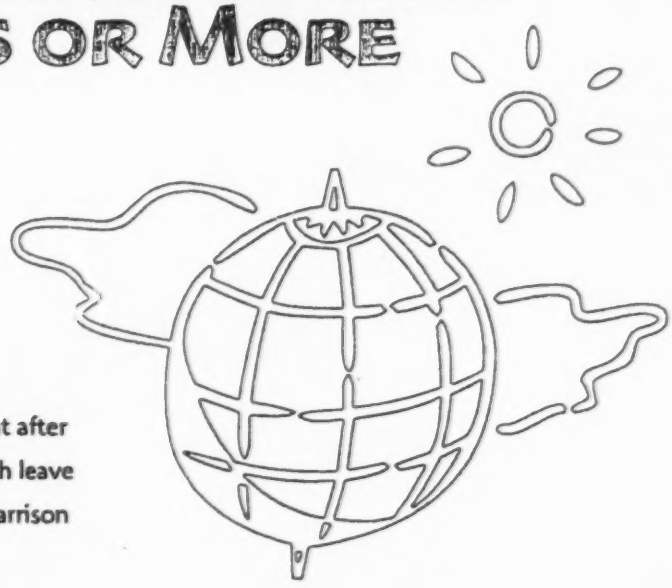
"Open Space is respectful of people and their views. It says, 'You are capable. You know what the issues are and why you are here.'"

For a two-hour meeting, Sully typically begins with introductions and a check-in, "creating the circle" by having participants introduce themselves and voice their interests and issues. In the second hour, one way that he "creates the marketplace" is by putting 8.5 x 11 inch sheets of paper in front of each person and inviting them to write down issues to post on the wall. All of the sessions are convened in the second half of the meeting and are held simultaneously. The group reconvenes at the end of the meeting for people to report on their discussions and plans.

Another way he has "opened the space" is by combining the marketplace and the sessions in a kind of "gallery walk." Conveners post topics and important information on newsprint around the room. Participants then "use their two feet" to move where they feel they need to be.

Sully stresses the importance of self advocacy. People know what they need, so he uses Open Space to allow them to get it. "Open Space is respectful of people and their views. It says, 'You are capable. You know what the issues are and why you are here.'" What are the results? "Incredible productivity," says Sully. "The energy levels are high, and people are jazzed!"

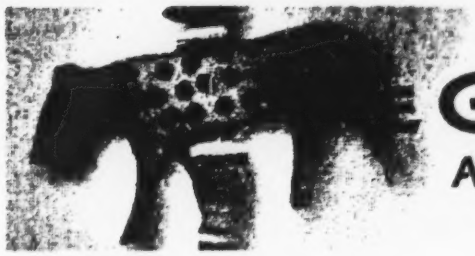
Opening Large Spaces: Four Days or More



"My mother used to say that after three days guests and fish leave something to be desired," writes Harrison Owen (OST, p. 31).

This statement has been waiting to be challenged. Perhaps it is no surprise that it has been challenged at the Peace Corps where people have, over the years, developed skills at preserving both fish and patience. In this last section we read about two Open Space events that last longer than three days. The annual Training Manager's conferences for the Africa Region, which last four to five days, is a long version of a classic Open Space event.

Some have suggested that it is inappropriate to use the term Open Space to describe the first Pre-Service Training (PST) in Tonga. The Tonga PST ran for two weeks, and its facilitators, who credit Open Space with inspiring them, used the term to describe the first PST in Tonga. The second time around they preferred the title "Community Entry and Participation." This training event is similar to innovations that have been taking place under such names as "Fully Integrated Training," "Community-Based Training" and "Village-Based Training" in Nicaragua, Guyana, Gabon, and Malawi. These innovations share with Open Space a strong commitment to placing responsibility in the hands of participant-learners and a belief that any community contains a richness of resources from which we all can learn.



Gift of Open Space

Africa Region Training Managers Conferences

Brenda Bowman, Chief of Programming and Training for the Africa Region, begins this article with a tale of missed opportunity at a workshop before she encountered Open Space. Now that Open Space is a principal process for conducting the annual Africa Region Training Managers Conferences, Bowman and Patrick Triano, Africa Region Training Officer, are discovering needs and building relationships in ways they had not done before.

"At most conferences I go to, someone is sitting off to the side feeling cynical. With Open Space that person just isn't there."

—Bob Schmidt

"Open Space appeals to me," says Brenda Bowman, "because it captures the way people in Africa talk to each other anyway. The structure that is imposed encourages the establishment of relationships." To illustrate just how appropriate Open Space is to the kinds of cross-cultural situations in which Peace Corps staff and Volunteers often find themselves, Bowman shares a telling story.

"I remember a particularly pious workshop which I was involved in planning [before we discovered Open Space]. The purpose of the workshop was to learn about preserving the tropical rain forest. It was a beautiful workshop! We had a great design, view graphs, and small group participatory activities. On the third day I asked one of the participants what he thought of it. He said, 'Wonderful! Great! I'm learning a lot!' I then asked him what he thought of the rain forest. His answer was telling: 'Terrible place! Burn it down!' When I probed he described the rain forest as a dark, evil place where biology is highly unfriendly to people. It reminded me that my own culture has similar feelings about forests. Think about stories like Hansel and Gretel. In our beautiful workshop we hadn't addressed people's ambiguous relationship with the environment. Had we used Open Space and asked our participants to share their values and thoughts, their feelings about the intimidating strength of the forest would have come up sooner. Our whole workshop would have been different. If we'd based ourselves on some of the African realities, we would have started from a different place. We would probably have ended up in a different place too. Many African cultures view wild animals as a threat and an opportunity. They are a danger to domestic animals, crops, and people. But they are also a source of food and ornaments. Though hunting has declined, it used to play, and in some countries still does play, an important role in the physical and moral training of young men. Animals are totems, the stuff of powerful myths and fables. It's a long way from cartoon characters like Ranger Rick and Smokey the Bear. If I had used Open Space, instead of imposing my packaged, orderly workshop, we might all have learned so much more about how different cultures interact with the natural world."

Bowman and Triano now use Open Space for the annual Africa Region Training Managers conferences. They are organized around themes such as "Communities of Learning," "Training for Self-Reliance," and "Managing Change." Unlike many Peace Corps Open Space events, which begin and end with a day or so of tradi-

tional presentations or training, these four- to five-day Training Managers conferences are conducted almost entirely in Open Space. The only structured sessions are a brief "News from Washington" at the beginning and a "Next Steps" session at the end. When they introduced Open Space for the first time, Bowman and her colleagues distributed cloth packets of seeds to the participants and told them, "We don't know what you will make of these. We don't know if they will grow here. We don't even know if you like gardening. But we offer them as gifts. It's the same with Open Space. We don't know what you will make of it or whether it will work for you. We offer it as a gift." When asked whether she ever feels the need to add more structured activities to the conferences her answer is clear, "We fight it off. It's unnecessary."

Bowman and her colleagues are still facing some challenges in relation to Open Space. "Those of us from North America still have to remember to honor the silence. We sometimes forget that it's impolite to jump in." Silence is important culturally and to the Open Space process. They are also working on improving the use of proceedings during the conference. "We got the write ups up on the walls, but are not getting the conversations at the wall described in the book" (*Open Space Technology: A User's Guide*, p. 110–114). "This year we will use larger print (14 point), make room around the write ups for people to add post-its with comments and encourage them to do so."

And the results? Bob Schmidt, APCD for Education in Ethiopia, and a participant in a number of these conferences now uses Open Space with Volunteers in Reconnect Workshops and ISTs. "At most conferences I go to, someone is sitting off to the side feeling cynical. With Open Space that person just isn't there."

Triano has noticed the power of Open Space to serve as a "spontaneous needs assessment" or "discovery of needs" for participants. At the 1996 conference, issues such as the impact of training on the community in which it is held, diversity and cross-cultural training, independent learning, the inclusion of host country counterparts in pre-service training and integration of components surfaced and resurfaced in sessions originally intended by the group to address very different issues. "The issues were never resolved," he notes, "in that there is no single answer, but our perspectives on the questions are broader and better informed."

Bowman sees the outcomes in terms of relationships. "I am often surprised at the people who step forward," she says. "Very curious alliances are created between people I might never dream would choose to work together."

"I AM OFTEN SURPRISED AT the people who step forward. Very curious alliances are created between people I might never dream would choose to work together."

—Brenda Bowman

Advice and Lessons Learned

- The first moment is terrifying. You need to let go of control. Be sure that you have a good team to work with you. (Bowman)
- Remind participants (particularly Americans) to honor the silence and not jump in too quickly. (Bowman)
- The pace of Open Space is fast and the experience is multitextured. Try to create a form of reporting that reflects the creativity, spontaneity, and richness of the conversation. (Triano)

Opening Space for Community Entry and Participation in Pre-Service Training

Kauvai/Ha'ano, Tonga, November 1995 • Kapa, Tonga, December 1996

Planners of these Open Space conferences credit Open Space for inspiring them and giving them a sense of what is possible when schedules are loosened and participants are trusted to set their own goals and structure their own time, even for extended periods.

"It will never work in Tonga." Such is Jim Russell's memory of Drew Havea's reaction to the proposal that they incorporate some "classic" Open Space into the Asia Pacific Youth Roundtable in Tonga in June 1995. Havea, the Associate Peace Corps Director (APCD) for Technical and Community Services, "knew his country well," writes Jim Russell, the Programming and Training Officer for the Asia-Pacific Region, "and had seen staff, villagers, and Volunteers struggle with filling those quiet open spaces in meetings that occur when age or social position prevent one from speaking up and expressing oneself freely. So no one could have been more surprised than he when, at the end of the successful Roundtable he proposed 'opening up some space' in the next Pre-Service Training, scheduled to begin the following October."

And 'open space' they did! During two full weeks of the Pre-service Training (PST) they created a new training opportunity for participants in PST 53. Why? "During a typical PST," explains Havea, "Trainees don't have to give a second thought to how they are going to spend their time between 8:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. . . . We [the training staff] spend a lot of time making everything perfect. After the PST, Volunteers often have a sense of frustration with their supervisors. In a way we have set up their supervisors to fail by being so perfect." Jim Russell points out that in the traditional model,

"We do this in a controlled environment on an outer island. The only way to get out is to get on a boat and leave. There are no hotels or other places to escape to. They are forced into the environment without the need for rules and guidelines."

—Drew Havea

"little room was left for the Trainees to identify and set their own learning priorities."

So, for the past two years Havea and his colleagues have experimented with large blocks of "Open Space" time during PST 53 and 54. Other countries have been trying out similar models. Other countries have been implementing Fully Integrated Training (FIT), also known as Community-Based Training models, that have some kinship with Open Space. In all of these cases, participants are encouraged to be actively involved in the community in which they are living, setting their own learning goals and seeking out their own learning experiences. The emphasis is placed on direct involvement with the local community and, in many cases, the training staff is available as a resource rather than the conductor of formal sessions.

In Tonga, during the first four to five weeks of PST, days are filled with structured sessions lasting up to two hours and covering language,

cross-culture, medical, technical education, and technical community development. After this time, Trainees move to a remote island, are placed with new homestay families, and engage in one to two weeks of what Michael Ketover, the Technical Training Coordinator for the 1996 PST, calls the "FIT-like Open Space Week[s]".

Objectives for these weeks are:

- To develop self-reliance in Trainees in building relationships in the villages, in gathering information, and in identifying resources in the communities;
- To simulate the lack of structure common to a Volunteer's arrival and early weeks/months at their job sites;
- To allow Trainees to identify and pursue individual learning objectives.

Ideally, the role of the staff is to "be around as informants who can clarify questions," says Havea. In PST 53, language and cross cultural trainers were available as resources, but did not schedule formal sessions. "Trainees could come to see them if they wanted to, but weren't required to do so," explains Drew Havea. In PST 54, instructors scheduled specific sessions. Russell describes additional staff responsibilities as modeling community entry skill development, participating fully in host family and village activities, and monitoring Trainee well-being.

During PST 53, two evening meetings, lasting about two hours, were held in the middle and at the end of the Open Space week(s). They were designed to help Volunteers process the information they were gathering and the experiences they were having. Havea explains, "There are certain questions I ask about roles and responsibilities in the family, in child rearing . . . . I ask about business hours . . . and try to bring out what [the Trainees] are seeing and experiencing and feeling comfortable and uncomfortable with . . . . We also have local staff there to help with this processing . . . [to help determine] if a problem is related to misunderstandings of culture or language."

"In PST 54," writes Michael Ketover, "we spent a two-hour session afterwards reflecting about our ten-day experience. I framed our discussion in terms of the three original objectives, broken down into their parts. For example, the Trainees related their experiences, trying to intentionally make or strengthen relationships with the Tongans. Common (and uncommon!) difficulties encountered and success stories were warmly shared. We spoke about pace-of-life issues and motivation. Our idea was to simulate for ten days to some degree a new PCV's experiences entering a community. Coping strategies, healthy and not so healthy, were examined. These things drove the discussions."

"IDEALLY, THE ROLE OF THE staff is to be around as informants who can clarify questions."

—Drew Havea

This way of conducting Pre-Service Training is not strictly "Open Space," and some people are concerned about using the term in this context. It does, however, share some elements with a "classic" Open Space as defined by Harrison Owen. In it's openness, this community-based training has a structure. Havea points out that they deliberately choose a remote location for this portion of the PST: "We do this in a controlled environment on an outer island. The only way to get out is to get on a boat and leave. There are no hotels or other places to escape to. They are forced into the environment without the need for rules and guidelines." Unlike classic Open Space, however, the goal is not for participants to build relationships with each other, but with people in the community. The rituals of the Bulletin Board and the Marketplace take on new meaning. Learners, in effect, create their own bulletin boards by defining their own learning goals and then negotiate them in the marketplace of the community in which they are living.

Trainees were also provided with a theoretical framework to help them structure their experience. During the briefing at the beginning of the Open Space weeks, they were encouraged to frame their experience in the context of the Asset Approach to Community Development, which had been introduced during previous Technical Training discussions. Jim Russell explains, "This approach, based on the work of Wilson, O'Donnell, and Tharp, emphasizes community entry skills . . . PCTs were responsible for gathering information, identifying assets and resources, participating in community activity settings [i.e., home, school, town hall, agricultural fields, fishing reefs, etc.] and linking resources in order to create activities which would facilitate their continued training . . . Often the end product of this early community assessment is a list/map of the community's strengths, assets, and resources, as opposed to a list of deficits or needs."

Combining Open Space with the Asset Approach makes sense. Like Open Space, the Asset Approach assumes a richness within the community, whether it is a community of learners, as in a training group brought together around a theme, or a geographic community, such as a village on a remote Tongan island. Both approaches assume that resources are available within the community to address the many questions and issues of interest to them. Both invite individuals within the community to advocate for their needs and seek out the resources to address them.

Facilitators for PST 53 suggested that participants use a series of "guideline questions", inspired by the Asset Approach, to structure their write-ups for the proceedings:

1) What activity settings have you identified?
2) What activity settings have you participated in?
3) Who else were participants?
4) What are some assets/strengths you have identified in your community?
5) Who are the skilled people?
6) What are their skills?
7) How did you obtain the information?
8) Who have been your resources?
9) How did you go about linking these resources?

Participants handed these in at the last meeting, shared brief highlights with the group and participated in an evaluation. Copies were distributed to all participants, much like proceedings in a "classic" Open Space conference.

What are the results of "opening space" for an extended period of time for community-based training? Drew Havea explains, "This is a time for [Trainees] to make mistakes (hopefully not big ones!) and learn from them." He points out that they learn about their own motivation level and get a sense of their community entry style. "Some tip toe, some march right in. It gives them a reality check on their own response."

Both Havea and Russell noted the effect the community-based training week(s) has on Trainees' language skills and their motivation to learn Tongan. Four to five weeks of language training in the classroom do not give them a lot of skills with which to enter their new community. Russell writes, "PCTs who maximized the time spent with their homestay families, speaking and listening in Tongan, made rapid gains in language skills. Some PCTs expressed their opinion that they could have taken better advantage of the homestay Open Space had it occurred later in the training, when they would have had better language skills. I believe, however, that the timing was appropriate. Without exception, each Trainee returned to Tongatapu highly motivated to learn Tongan."

Havea and Russell also point out a benefit to the community that occurred during the PST 53. "Small business advisors initiated a process of linking . . . community fishermen with Ministry of Fishery officials, Ministry of Labor and Commerce officials and town officers to discuss fish marketing, storage and transport issues common to the villages of the island. It was done in such a way," explains Russell, "that the process was set in motion and then sustained by the local fishermen and Ministry representatives after we departed for Phase II."

"This is a time for [Trainees] to make mistakes (hopefully not big ones!) and learn from them."

—Drew Havea

This does not mean that this "new" way of training is without challenges or critics. In Havea's experience, "There is some frustration [on the part of Trainees] with the lack of schedule at first . . . . [Though most eventually] realize what an opportunity this is to spend time with their homestay family and others in the community . . . . We still struggle with about two percent of our Trainees who don't take advantage of the Open Space time."

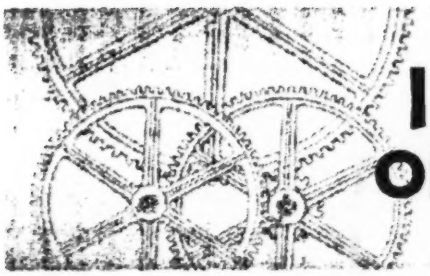
He also acknowledges, "My biggest struggle with Open Space is on the staff side. They want to come out with a product at the end . . . . Some staff would like to give concrete assignments, such as having participants conduct one environmental education workshop or meeting with specific people [during the Open Space week(s)]. I have so far been able to convince them that [if we did that] the whole orientation of the week would be towards doing that assignment. It wouldn't allow them to get a good feeling for the community and setting their own goals."

Michael Ketover notes the problems created by holding scheduled sessions for language and cross cultural training. "According to the Trainees' evaluations, this detracted from the experience in that much family house work was done in these morning hours, and the men would go to the bush (farm) . . . at this time. Trainees would return home for rest time. [They] suggested either no sessions scheduled or [scheduling them] at night time with language instructors available."

For the most part, however, participants and trainers have been pleased with the results of "opening space" for an extended period of time. Michael Ketover points out, "Participating in these training activities is energizing and fun for the trainer and, as the evaluations strongly confirm, for the Trainees." And Havea reminds us, "Open Space is a compromise between being perfect and imperfect. It is somewhere in the middle where Trainees can discover things for themselves."

Advice and Lessons Learned

- Avoid any structured sessions during the Open Space week. (Ketover)
- Avoid any structured assignments during the Open Space week. (Havea)
- Remember that proceedings don't bring closure. Encourage participants to "report back" during the final meeting. (Havea)
- Letting go and trusting the process will allow learning. Remember that if you are walking through the village and see a Trainee sitting under a tree reading a book, it doesn't necessarily mean that s/he is not learning. (Havea)



If You Are Thinking of Using Open Space

Before you decide to conduct an Open Space event, you may want to consult Harrison Owen's *Open Space Technology: A User's Guide** (ICE publication no. TR103). To give you a sense of what lies ahead, we have provided a brief summary of some of the issues to take into consideration before you jump in.**

1. Examine the Conditions for Success.

Open Space Technology works best "in situations where a diverse group of people must deal with complex, and potentially conflicting material, in innovative and productive ways. It is particularly powerful when nobody knows the answer, and the ongoing participation of a number of people is required to deal with the questions" (OST p. 15).

Open Space Technology won't work in any situation where "the answer is already known, where somebody at a high level thinks he or she knows the answer, or where that somebody is the sort that must know the answer, and therefore must always be in charge" (OST, p. 14–15).

2. Be sure you have a clear theme.

3. Remember the group should be composed of whoever cares about the issue and chooses to be there.

The fact is, their caring will be sufficient to insure their attendance. Owen reminds us that, "Jobs done by people who do not care are not worth a whole lot." Really caring means that people have passion and are willing to take responsibility to make sure that something will get done. If people deemed central to the task do not show up, it is quite possible that the task will not get done. On the other hand, "it may turn out that those folks were not nearly as essential as was previously assumed" (OST p. 22). Certainly, people can be personally invited and encouraged to come. In inviting people to participate be sure to tell them enough about Open Space to help them understand that they will be asked to take an active role in the conference.

4. Pay attention to the space you will be using.

You will probably need twice the space allocated to a conventional meeting for the main "Open Space" area (e.g., a typical hotel meeting room that seats 100 would be likely to work for an Open Space with 50 participants). The main meeting space also should have a large wall for the agenda and plenty of natural light. This large space can be used for some breakout areas as well as for housing the Newsroom and Community Bulletin Board areas. You will also need additional breakout rooms and/or spaces for sessions. In choosing sites, also look beyond traditional breakout rooms for less formal gathering spaces, such as lobbies, gardens, and poolsides.

5. Consider the importance of proceedings.

The recording and distribution of proceedings to the participants adds significantly to the

*Harrison Owen, Open Space Technology: A User's Guide, Potomac: Abbott Publishing, 1992.

**Thanks to Ignatio Chiyaka, Language Coordinator for Zimbabwe, and Paul Sully, Youth Development Coordinator, for their contributions to this section.

power of Open Space: the potential for action based on new information or creative thinking by a number of people. Oral discussions of issues with no written record mean that people can forget, exchange faulty recollections, and lose clarity about commitments. In brief, no writing means it was just talking, and the possibility for action is reduced.

Actual distribution of the full proceedings at the end of the event offers the greatest impact and is highly desirable. It is also logistically challenging. For example, if there are 40 participants and 50 pages of proceedings, 2000 photocopies will need to be made. Often, the production of proceedings will require someone to work late or long hours to achieve a quick turnaround. (However, the trade-off is not having to compile and distribute proceedings long AFTER the conference.) In some locales where Peace Corps works, it may be impossible to get the copies so quickly. An alternative is to tape or attach all the pages of session summaries to walls for a "gallery walk," allowing participants to see, read, and edit the drafts. This allows information sharing, publishes commitments made, and maintains the energy to the end of the workshop. Subsequent to the event, proceedings can be copied and mailed out to all participants."

6. Gather the human and material resources.

Human

- An Open Space facilitator to explain the rules and respond to queries and to keep the space safe for the participants
- A person to assist during the market place activity
- A person to do signs and draw (if you are not artistically inclined)
- A Newsroom manager (someone with computer know how)

Materials

- Masking tape, clothes pins, push pins, or string (things to hold papers up on a wall)
- Chart paper or newsprint, one for each breakout space and two for the main room
- Lots of markers
- Microphone (strongly recommended for use as a 'talking stick')
- Post-it note pads, 3 x 5 inches,
- A bell or something to call people together
- Computer, printer, access to a copier

Signs/posters/handouts to be prepared in advance

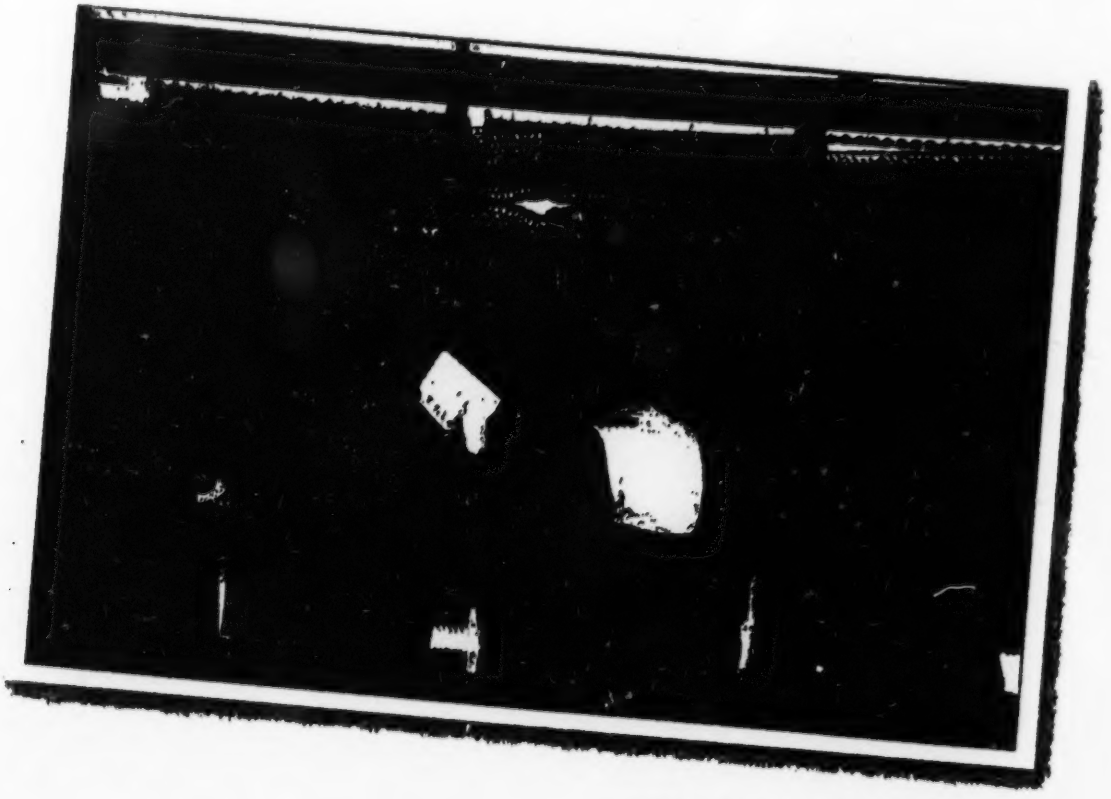
- Hand-drawn pictures on separate sheets of poster paper of:
  - a bumblebee
  - a butterfly
  - two feet.
- The four principles—written in large block letters on one or two sheets:
  - Whoever comes is the right people.
  - Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
  - Whenever it starts is the right time.
  - When it's over, it's over.
- The theme or key question of the Open Space session—written in large block letters on one or two sheets of poster paper as seems appropriate
- The cover page of the proceedings—needed as a prop to launch Open Space—on letter size paper.
- Construction of the wall agenda or matrix:
  - On a poster sheet, in block letters—Community Bulletin Board
  - On letter size paper—A. M.; P. M.; and one page per week day (example, Friday, Saturday, etc.)
  - On Post-It note pads—notations of days, times, and locations of sessions (one Post- It note sheet per possible session time and place)

- As Optional handouts:
  - Map of meeting area that shows the breakout spaces
  - Blank schedule of times, days, morning and evening news (on letter size paper) that participants can fill in as a personal schedule

7. Remember the importance of the facilitator's role.

In addition to assisting with the logistics, the facilitator, according to Owen, must:

- Show up — Be physically on hand.
- Be present — Provide Open Space participants a "profound sense of grounding, reality, solidity, which translates to security, peace and strength. Being in the presence of one who is truly present is comfortable — in the root meaning of that word, 'with strength'" (OST, p. 49).
- Tell the truth — It "is not so much faithfully reporting the facts . . . but rather, BEING the truth. That is . . . reflecting in the way one is, an essential, powerful, good humanity" (OST, p. 49).
- Let it all go — Another way of saying "have no attachment to fixed outcomes" or, in the words of Ignatio Chiyaka, Language Coordinator for Zimbabwe, "Even though you may think that people are not getting the depth they need. They are the ones to determine that."



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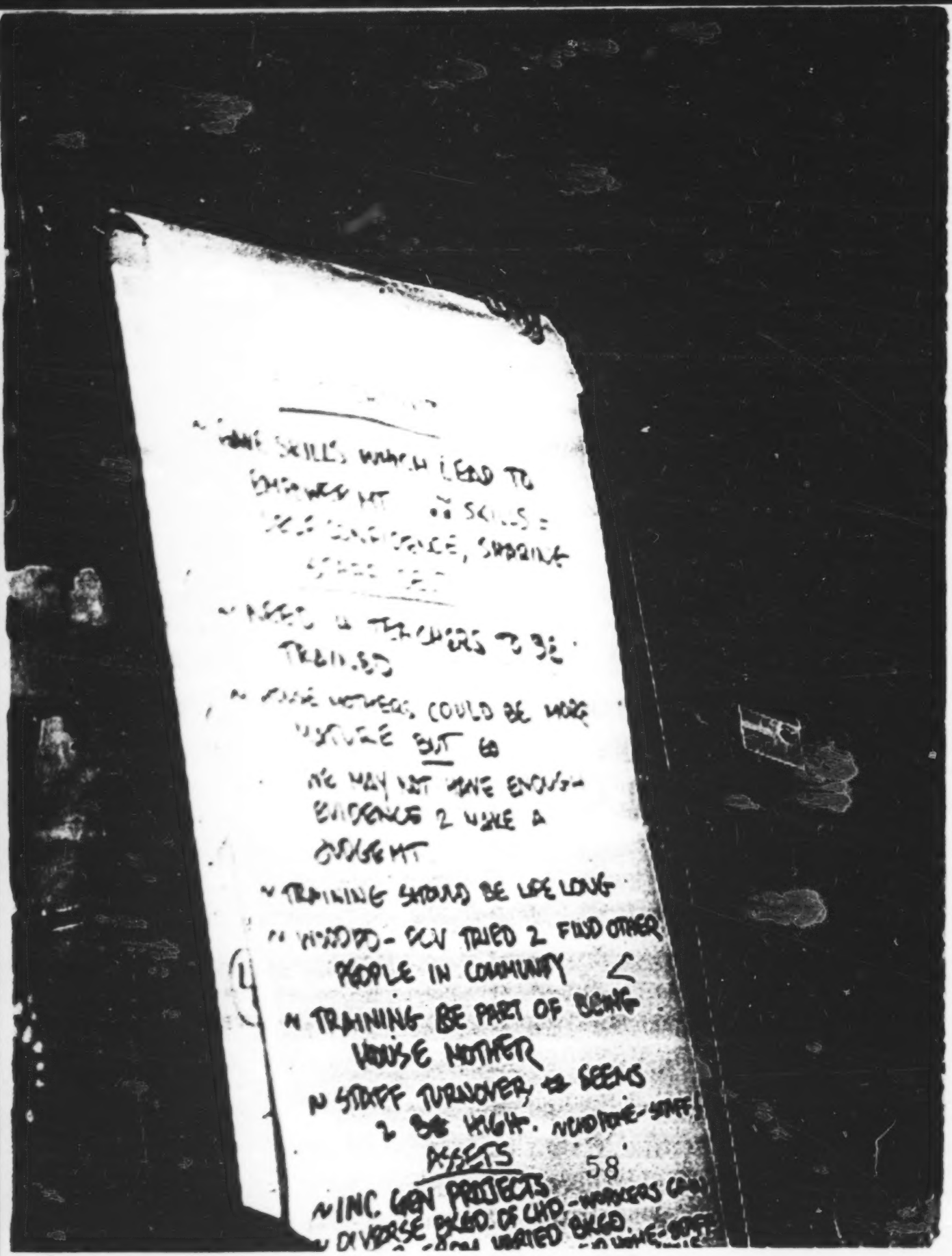
A Sampler of Peace Corps Open Space Events

We know there have been more Open Space events than the ones identified below. This partial compendium is intended to supplement the "tales" with additional information about when, where, and in what circumstances Peace Corps has used Open Space. From the table, readers can identify relevant information based on geographic or cultural similarities, the theme or purpose of an event, the types of participants and/or the length/duration of an event. Contacts are given by name and affiliation to facilitate further information sharing.

Event	Date/Length of Open Space	Participants	Contact(s)
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire Health/ Water and Sanitation Sectors	May 1995 2 days	APCDs, DC Staff	Shelley Smith, Angela Churchill, Health Spec., PC/W
Tonga, AP Youth Roundtable	June 1995 2-1/2 days	Volunteers, HCCs, DC and local staff	Sandy Callier, PC/W; Drew Havea, PC/Tonga; Paul Sully, Youth Spec., PC/W
Benin/Togo Joint Workshop on Cross Cultural and Volunteer Safety Issues	August 1995 2 days	Volunteers, HCAs, DC and local staff	Michael O'Neill, Special Services, PC/W; Raymond Stewart, PC/Benin
CAR Counterpart Agencies Workshop on Volunteer Safety and Support	September 1995 2 days	Volunteers, HCAs, local and DC staff	Michael O'Neill, Special Services, PC/W; Lynn Foden, AF Region, PC/W
IA Regional Workshop on Ecotourism	October 1995 2 days	APCDs, HCCs, DC staff	John Shores, Peter Maille, Env. Spec., PC/W
Dominican Republic Workshop on Ecotourism	January 1996 1-1/2 days	Volunteers, HCAs, DC and local staff	John Shores, Env. Spec., PC/W; Alberto Rodriguez PC/Dom. Rep.
Guyana Project Review	June 1996 1-1/2 days	Volunteers, HCCs, local and DC staff	T. J. Delhanty, PC/Guyana; Paul Sully, Youth Spec., PC/W
Poland, Environmental Education TIPS Conf.	September 1996 1 day	Volunteers, DC and local staff	Elizabeth Macdonald, Educ. Spec., PC/W
OTAPS Planning Retreat, Washington, DC	March 1997 1 Day	HQ P&T staff	Mark Nachtrieb, PC/W; Sandy Callier, PC/W; Michael Mercil, OST P/W

Event	Date/Length of Open Space	Participants	Contact(s)
Western Samoa, Sub Regional Youth Intervention Workshop	October 1996 2 days	Volunteers, HCCs, DC and local staff	Steve Nagler, PC/Samoa; Lee Lacy, AP Region, PC/W; Paul Sully, Youth Spec. PC/W
San Francisco, Nat'l Assoc. for Env. Ed. Conf.	November 1996 10 sessions throughout Conf.	PC staff and counterparts from IA, AP, AF and DC	Jacob Fillion, Env. Spec., PC/W; Chris Arthur, IAP Region, PC/W; Francisco Garces, PC/Ecuador
Africa Region Training Mgrs. Annual Workshop	April 1995, 1996, 1997 4–5 days	Training Mgrs., DC staff	Brenda Bowman, AF Region, PC/W; Patrick Triano, Africa Region, PC/W
PST, Youth Development, Tonga	1 day	Volunteers, local staff	Drew Havea, PC/Tonga
IST and Reconnect Workshops, Ethiopia	1/2 day	Volunteers, local staff	Bob Schmidt, PC/Ethiopia
IST, Small Business Development	1/2 day	Volunteers, local staff	Steve Marma, PC/El Salvador
Community-Based Training Conference Washington, DC	September 1997 1 Day	Lang. Coords. and Training Directors	Doug Gilzow, Lang. Spec., PC/W; Paul Sully Youth Spec., PC/W
ECAM Regional "SBD/ TEFL Staff Workshop: Education for Participation"	May 1997 1 day	ECAM SBD and TEFL HCN Program Managers, some APCDs	Bill Edwards, SBD Spec., PC/W; Terri Lapinsky, Educ. Spec., PC/W; Nancy Reeder, PC/Poland; Roz Wollmering, VRS PC/W
Subregional Youth Development Workshop—Jamaica	March 1997 2 Days	Volunteers, local staff, HCNs, youth, APCDs, DC staff	Janet Simoni, CD/Jamaica; Paul Sully, Youth Spec. PC/W; Anita Friedman, IAP Region, PC/W; Lisa Frye, PC/W
Subregional Youth Development Workshop—Costa Rica	September 1996 2 Days	Volunteers, local staff, HCNs, youth, APCDs, DC staff	Paul Sully, Youth Spec. PC/W; Anita Friedman, IAP Region, PC/W; Juan Coward, PC/ Costa Rica
Asia Subregional Workshop, "Linking Schools and Communities," Mongolia	May 1996 2 Days	APCDs, DC staff, Local HCNs, and PCVC's	Sandy Callier, PC/W; Elizabeth MacDonald, Educ. Spec., PC/W

Event	Date/Length of Open Space	Participants	Contact(s)
Language Coordinators Workshop— Franc./ Lusophone in Niger	1997 5 days	Lang. Coords. and some Training Managers	Joe Byrnes, Lang. Spec., PC/W
Language Coordinators Workshop—Franc./ Lusophone in Burkina Faso	1996 5 days	Lang. Coords. and some Training Managers	Joe Byrnes, Lang. Spec., PC/W
Language Coordinators Workshop— Anglophone Africa Subregion	April 1995, 1996— 1/2 day; April 1997— 1 day	Language Coordinators	Doug Gilzow, Lang. Spec., PC/W



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